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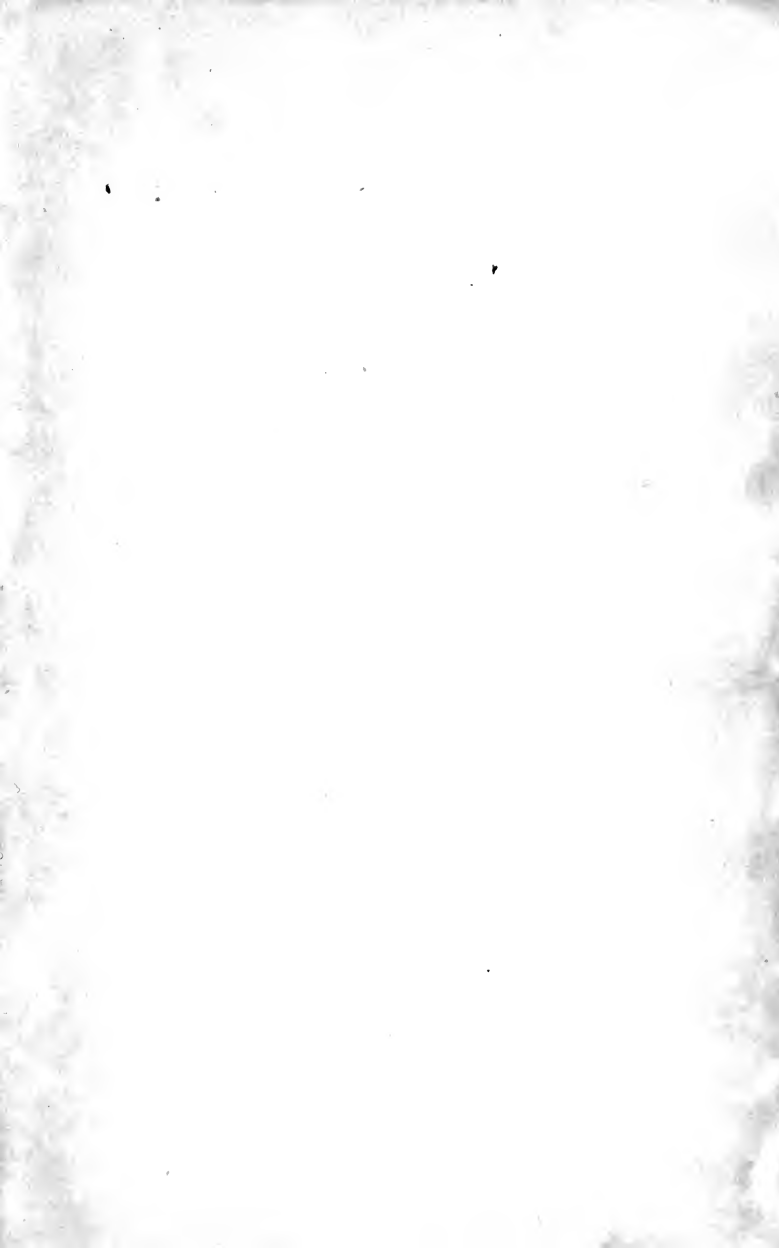
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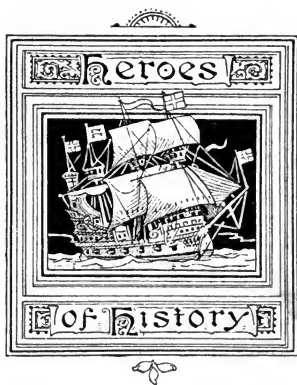
PIZARRO.

Pizarro

HIS ADVENTURES AND CONQUESTS

BY

George M. Towle



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Preface.



A PREVIOUS volume of the "Heroes of History" series followed the bold and successful voyage of Vasco da Gama around the Cape of Good Hope, and to the far and then little-known regions of Hindostan. This volume transports the young reader to the Western hemisphere, and describes the travels and conquests of one of the most resolute and adventurous captains that any age has produced.

Pizarro was heroic in the indomitable energy with which he pursued his end; in the patience with which he bore hardships as terrible as ever man encountered; in the courage with which he assailed an empire containing millions of people, and having a vast and disciplined army, with a mere handful of resolute souls like himself; and in the vigour and genius with which, Peru once subdued, he founded and established the Spanish rule over the conquered nation.

That he invaded and conquered Peru from motives of ambition and greed of gold is but too true. It is probable that higher motives than these seldom entered his mind. Like all, or nearly all, the great captains of his time, he did not hesitate to carry wide-spread havoc among a peaceful

race, to lay desolate a thriving land, to usurp a power to which he had not the shadow of a right, and to use means in achieving his purpose which were often barbarously cruel. It was then the custom of nations to make conquests and to assail unoffending nations for the sake of dominion and riches.

By Pizarro's conquest Spain acquired a splendid empire and gained a footing in South America by means of which she gradually extended her power over large portions of that continent ; and thus Pizarro may at least be credited with having laid there the foundations of a higher and more permanent civilization than that which he replaced.

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PIZARRO:

HIS ADVENTURES AND CONQUESTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE RUNAWAYS.

ON the early morning of a warm autumn day, not quite four hundred years ago, three lads, varying in age from thirteen to fifteen, were hurriedly climbing a rough and precipitous mountain road in Central Spain. Every now and then, as they mounted higher, they would look anxiously back to see if they were followed; and finding they were not, they continued their ascent with brisker steps and more cheerful countenances. Once in a while they came to a spot where an opening in the dense and luxuriant forest exposed to their view the broad plain, still veiled by a soft morning haze, which they had left a few hours before. Here they would stop, and strain their eyes in the direction they had come, as if to discern any pursuing figures who might appear in the road far below, which, so high were they above it, seemed like a narrow yellow thread winding amid the expanse of green.

They were stalwart, dark-featured youths, with stout sinews and sturdy limbs, and serious, resolute faces; wearing

the same rude apparel, which consisted of a coarse shirt, a loose jacket, short wide breeches fastened at the knees, rude sandals on their feet, and large, coarsely woven woollen caps on their heads. Each carried a bundle on a stick, which he swung across his shoulder. As they pressed upward they spoke but little ; they not only wished to save their breath for the long tramp before them, but their thoughts were so deeply absorbed in their serious situation that they were not disposed to be talkative.

At last they reached a steep and rugged cliff, the summit of which was almost bare, and from which, over the tops of the thick forest, they could clearly see the plain stretched out for miles till it faded near the misty horizon. They were tired and hungry, and, despite the danger of pursuit, they resolved to rest awhile on this convenient crag. Throwing down their bundles, and lying upon the patches of moss which here and there covered the rock, they proceeded to discuss such a breakfast as their resources permitted. They took from their bundles some coarse bread and raw onions, a few bunches of grapes which they had picked by the road, and some chestnuts ; and these homely viands were quickly disposed of. Then one of them produced a small can, and running to a mountain brook which leaped madly over a little chasm near by, filled it with deliciously cold water, and brought it to his companions, who drank of it eagerly. Refreshed by their simple morning meal, the three lads, lying at full length on the patches of moss, turned their faces instinctively towards the plain, and pointed out to each other the spots familiar to them all.

"Look !" said one, a trifle taller than the others, whom they called Francisco, "you can plainly see the old citadel there on the right ; and there is the old wall, and the town on the side of the hill ; and you can just catch a glimpse of the big castle of the duke, or at least its great square western tower ; and that little open place is our broad plaza.

What a distance we must be from Truxillo, everything looks so small ! I wonder how many miles we have come."

"Oh !" exclaimed the youngest of the three, "and can't you see, Francisco, just this side of the town, the round hill where our homes are ? they must be those huts midway up the slope ; and still farther this way are the fields where we used to tend the swine."

"We have done with that for ever, thank Heaven !" cried Francisco heartily. "No more tending of swine for us. Gonzalo and Juan must do my share henceforth, as well as their own. Bah ! what a dog's life ! But we are leaving it, and are going out into the great world to seek our fortunes. We will be soldiers, and fight our way to fame and power. We will go across the seas to the beautiful lands which the brave Columbus found, and where we will surely become great and rich."

The third, who had not yet spoken, and whose name was Pedro, sat and listened with a rather gloomy face. At last he said,—

"But think what we must go through before we so much as begin ! We haven't a marco among us, and still we must get to Seville somehow. It is, old Lopez says, at least one hundred and fifty miles ; and we shall be lucky if we get a ride now and then on a jaded donkey or a rickety cart. When I think of it, I almost wish myself back among the pigs again."

Francisco darted an angry glance at his companion, and exclaimed,—

"What, Pedro ! faint-hearted already ? Out on such cowardly thoughts ! I'd rather starve than go back to that slave's work. Come, pluck up your courage ! We can't find ourselves in a worse plight than we have been in all our lives."

He rose from the ground, and, eagerly scanning such portions of the road as were visible here and there, added,—

“We are not yet pursued. They may think we have gone another way—towards Madrid. They did not suppose, perhaps, that we should climb the mountains in the night. But let us go forward. We shall not be safe till we are far away from here. I have heard that there is a great river in the valleys beyond the mountains. We must not rest till we have put that between us and our tyrants.”

So saying, he bounded up the road with the buoyant step of youth and hope; and his comrades, inspired by his cheerful and manly words, briskly followed him.

As they trudged along—now over bald ledges where the sun blazed remorselessly upon them, now through dense cool forests of chestnut and oak, now across marshy levels where the overgrown waste was covered with exasperating tangles of rank shrubs, through which they scrambled as best they could—they talked, as they went, about the miseries of the past, and the bright and glowing hopes they had formed of the future.

Ere many hours they reached the summit of the Guadalupe Mountains; and it was with a sigh of relief that they reflected that instead of climbing upward, sometimes over steep cliffs and near dangerous fissures, they would now descend by a gradual winding road to the green and sunny valleys they could just discern far below them.

Persuaded that, when once they had placed the mountains between them and the wretched homes they had left, they would be secure from pursuit, and free to pursue the journey at their leisure, they bounded down the road, now singing a verse of some rude peasant-song, now running a race to see which would first reach a certain tree or a bend in the road, now leaping lightly across a roaring mountain brook. They soon found themselves in the midst of luxuriant fields of wheat and rye, and crossing turfy hillside pastures where flocks of sheep were quietly grazing. Then they came upon olive-groves, interspersed with thick-hanging vineyards, upon

which the luscious and now just ripe clusters hung temptingly. There were grapes of every hue and size; and our wanderers did not hesitate to eat their fill of the juicy fruit, their hunger having been once more sharpened by the long tramp they had taken since their breakfast on the crag.

It was now very hot, and the boys rested a while under the dense shade of a copse of chestnuts. But their young spirits soon rose again, and they pushed on towards a straggling hamlet which they perceived at a distance of a mile or two down the road. The hamlet consisted of a few peasant-huts; and above it rose a hill, upon which stood the ruins of a once noble Moorish castle. No sooner did Francisco espy this ruin than he proposed that they should seek shelter within its crumbling walls for the night. They began to climb the hill, though they were now so weary that they could scarcely drag one leg after the other, when they encountered a rough-looking peasant trudging home from his day's work in the fields. He stopped, stared at the wanderers, and then asked them where they came from, and whither they were going.

Francisco frankly replied that they had run away from their homes beyond the mountains, that they were on their way to Seville to enlist in the wars, and that they proposed to spend the night in the castle-ruin.

The peasant looked more curiously at them than ever. A grim smile gradually spread over his sun-burned face as he replied,—

“No need of your going up there. Come home with me to my hut yonder. You shall have a bundle of hay in a corner, and to-morrow I will share my breakfast with you.”

The hospitable offer was no sooner made than joyfully accepted. The boys went back with the peasant, slept soundly on the hay, and rising, as did their host, with the dawn, partook of his frugal meal of chestnuts, coarse bread, goat's milk, and grapes.

As, much refreshed and very grateful, they started forth to resume their journey, the peasant cried out to them,—

“God give you luck ! and if you ever get to be great captains, don’t forget the night you spent in my hut.”

Day after day they continued to trudge bravely along with their little bundles on their backs, picking up what bits of food they could in the villages through which they passed, regaling themselves on the grapes and other fruit they found plentifully by the wayside, and resting by night wherever they happened to be when the sun disappeared behind the hills.

They had been travelling thus for some days, when one afternoon they came in sight of a large town—a larger town than any of them had ever seen before. It nestled close upon the sloping banks of a wide, swift river, which the wanderers could see appearing and disappearing in sparkling patches among the trees for miles away. Above the town rose a hoary castle, its huge towers hung thick with ivy and other parasites, and its battlements looming steep and grim above the river ; on another hill stood a long low building, which the boys easily recognized as a convent ; near the convent was a prison ; while above the group of closely-built houses appeared the spires of two churches.

The sight of this large town caused them to hasten their pace, and they briskly pushed forward and entered its narrow streets. On asking a passer-by, they learned that the place was Merida, and that the wide river which flowed by it was the Guadiana, one of the largest streams in Spain.

Francisco, ignorant as he was, knew something at least of the geography of his native country. With cheery voice he told his mates that they had gone almost a third of the way from Truxillo to Seville, and that the most difficult part of the journey was that which they had already accomplished. Though quite tired, the boys could not resist the temptation to wander about the streets of Merida, which presented many

sights to attract their curiosity and wonder. They stared in at the shop-windows ; and their mouths watered at the succulent viands they espied at the butchers' stalls, and the cakes which were displayed in the pastry-cooks' windows. They gazed with delight at a troop of gaily dressed cavaliers, with their flowing plumes and glittering cuirasses, who pranced across the plaza—all the more eagerly when they learned that these cavaliers were on their way to the wars in Italy. They listened to the playing of lutes and singing which were going on in front of a quaint old inn just by the river, and admiringly watched the boats as they shot swiftly to and fro on the stream.

It was dusk before, utterly worn out with fatigue, they bethought themselves of their hunger, and of the necessity of finding a shelter for the night. As they were in a large town, with no money, they despaired of obtaining the hearty meal they craved ; so, choosing a secluded nook on the river-bank, they contented themselves with a few chestnuts and grapes which they had taken care to stow away in their bundles.

Then they looked about them for a resting-place. There was one, happily, near at hand. About a quarter of a mile off they observed a large circular edifice, so lofty that even in the deepening dusk they could perceive that it was not an ordinary building, and that, moreover, it appeared to be a ruin.

Passing once more into the narrow zigzag streets, then up a rather steep hill, and across a bridge spanning a stream which ran into the Guadiana, they soon reached the structure. Entering it by a very high and wide portal, they found themselves in a large circular space choked with weeds and rubbish. Around this space, which was roofless and open to the air above, were built rows of stone seats, rising one behind the other. These, too, were overgrown and tangled with a profusion of wild shrubs and vines. In this enclosure

they easily found a convenient spot. They without more ado threw themselves upon the bed of weeds, and were soon wrapped in deep slumber.

There was but one highroad passing southward from Merida ; it was that which led to the city which was the goal of the boys' difficult journey—Seville. From the top of the amphitheatre, to which they scrambled as soon as the bright rays of the rising sun aroused them, they could observe all the surrounding country ; and they were glad to see, just below the old castle and not far away, a bridge spanning the Guadiana. They were soon tramping gaily across it, and, as they went, did not fail to admire its imposing proportions, its solid masonry, and wide-springing arches. They would have found, by counting them, that there were no less than eighty of these arches ; and they might have been told that the bridge had been built by the warlike Roman emperor Trajan more than a thousand years before. The rest of their journey was almost wholly through a country which seemed a continuous garden. Groves of olives and of oranges, dense vineyards covering the hill-sides and hill-tops, yellow wheat-fields spread over the intervalles, dense forests of chestnut and oak affording a grateful shade from the hot sun, and picturesque streams winding amid the meadows or dashing down from the hills, were passed in quick succession.

The boys did not hurry after leaving Merida ; for they were now confident of not being pursued, and they felt sure of food and shelter the rest of the way. The world was all before them, and they knew that there was plenty of time at their disposal.

Their tramp was now all the more enjoyable, as they came more frequently upon towns and villages, and met more people going to and fro. Often they encountered a train of pack-mules carrying grain or fruit ; now a flock of shaggy merino sheep going from Castile into their own province—Estremadura ; sometimes whole colonies of peasants—men,

women, babies, donkeys, and all—going to reap the harvests in the lowlands ; and once in a while a troop of bravely caparisoned soldiers, on their way to join the armies of King Ferdinand.

There yet remained one more mountain range to cross—that of the Sierra Morena. But it was less lofty than that of the Guadalupe ; and, besides, they felt that they might make the ascent as leisurely as they pleased. They had now no pursuers to fear, no cruel punishment to dread.

They crossed the Sierra Morena, and once more descended into valleys lovely to the eye, and fragrant with luxuriant and ripening fruit. They heard with delight that the greater part of their journey had been passed, and that, by pushing resolutely forward, they would ere long reach their destination.

So it proved. About noon one day they came in sight of the spires and domes of the celebrated city, which glittered afar in the sunlight, and which they had undergone so much to reach. The noble steeple of the great cathedral, the largest in the world save St. Peter's at Rome, rose high above the other buildings, and the boys exclaimed in wonder at beholding it. The vast palace of the Alcazar, too, which looked as if it were a mile long, and was flanked by great square towers, was eagerly pointed out and gazed at. Their long journey was at last ended ; and as they entered the ancient, winding streets—threading their way amidst crowds of people attired in every variety and colour of costume, past balconied dwellings and fragrant gardens, across the spacious square with its splashing fountain, and under the shadow of the lofty cathedral—they declared that they had never imagined so grand and beautiful a city to exist in all the world.

CHAPTER II.

PIZARRO A SOLDIER.

MY readers may have guessed that the bravest and most determined of the runaways was no other than the hero of this book. It was indeed Francisco Pizarro, destined to become one of the most famous conquerors and adventurers the world has seen, who thus ran away from his wretched home in Truxillo, induced two boys as badly treated as himself to go with him, and travelled on foot to Seville to take part in the exciting and perilous events of his time.

Pizarro, at the time of his escape, was about fifteen years old. From his earliest recollection he had known nothing but cruelty, drudgery, and hardship. His father, Gonzalo Pizarro, was not only a gentleman of wealth and good descent, but a brave soldier, who had fought with gallantry and distinction in the wars; but his mother was a humble and ignorant peasant, who, it is said, gave birth to Francisco on the steps of a church, took him to the wretched hovel which was her home, and reared him in her own condition of life. Francisco's illegitimate birth was a stigma of which he was forced to suffer the penalty. While he bore his father's name, Pizarro, he was not admitted to his house or recognized as his son. The haughty old Spaniard disdained a child born in disgrace; and so the poor little boy was consigned to his mother's low lot, to eat the bread of poverty.

to grow up amid mean and squalid surroundings in ignorance and privation, and to follow the vocation of a swineherd. Almost as soon as he could walk, he was set to taking care of pigs; and this he continued to do until, rebelling against his fate and inspired with a fiery ambition, he took the bold resolve to leave the harsh past behind him, and carve out a future for himself.

He had known but few of the joys of childhood. To look after the pigs from dawn till dark, to subsist on a scanty allowance of the coarsest food, to sleep at night on a floor of cobble-stones thinly sprinkled with hay, to be mercilessly beaten at the slightest neglect of his task, and to continue this weary round day after day and month after month—this had been the almost unbroken tenor of his life.

It happened that while he was pursuing, with fiery impatience and anger in his heart, the detested round of his daily task, an event took place which thrilled his whole soul with ambition, and cast a bright ray of hope through the deep gloom of his life. A rough, weather-beaten sailor arrived in Truxillo, bringing with him wonderful news. Young Pizarro, as it chanced, fell in with this sailor, and heard his story; and he listened to it with beating heart. A new land, the sailor said, had been discovered: he had seen it with his own eyes. He had sailed with a great Italian captain, named Christopher Columbus, far across the unknown seas. Sometimes, amid terrific storms, they had thought that they would be lost; but at last they had reached a beautiful land smiling with plenty, and rich beyond conjecture, it was thought, in gold, silver, and precious stones. This land was believed to be a part of Asia, but a part unknown at least before; and he had returned with Columbus to tell the marvellous story of its discovery and its wealth. The sailor gave a glowing account of all that he had seen: he described the perils and excitements of the voyage, and made the boy's eyes glisten with his tales of "a life on the ocean-wave;" in

his rude fashion he told of the thrilling moment when the shout of "Land! land!" echoed across the waters from ship to ship; he pictured all the strange and remarkable sights he had seen on going ashore; and he ended by relating how the news had created a great sensation at Cadiz, and other cities on or near the coast, where other expeditions were already proposed to be fitted out for the newly discovered country.

Young Pizarro, deeply affected by what he heard from the sailor, plied him with questions, and listened eagerly to his replies. As he tended the pigs by day, he pondered on what he had heard; and at night bright visions of distant lands, and exciting dreams of adventure by sea, attended his slumbers. Here, then, was a career worthy of his courage and ambition, and he soon made up his mind that he would risk all to pursue it. Pizarro had long thought he would like to be a soldier. As news of the Spanish victories penetrated to his remote home, he longed to join in the din and turmoil of the battle-field.

He resolved, therefore, that as soon as chance favoured him he would escape from his drudgery, make his way as best he could to Seville, join the army, and finally, if he found an opportunity, embark in some expedition to the newly discovered countries beyond the ocean of which the sailor had told him.

Full of his scheme, which he imparted to two young companions, swineherds like himself, he waited a great while, as patiently as he could, for the moment to arrive when he might hope to escape. It came at last; and, as we have seen, he succeeded in reaching Seville with his friends.

They had not been long in the city before they saw many signs of military preparation. Troops of soldiers were constantly passing through the streets, and the transports in the river were actively getting ready to depart for the theatre of war. The boys were alone and penniless, and Seville was

less hospitable than the rustic hamlets through which they had passed. The sight of the soldiers, too, in their gay attire and bravery of weapons and armour, rekindled the ardour of Pizarro, and made him impatient to become one of them. Though but fifteen, he was tall, stalwart, and resolute; and he had only to make known his wish to join the king's forces to be admitted into the ranks. The three companions now separated, each going his own way; and it was with tearful grief that they parted from each other.

The war in which Spain was then engaged was going on in Southern Italy. The good king and queen, Ferdinand and Isabella (the same who had not long before so generously aided Columbus in his expedition of discovery across the Atlantic), had a cousin, whose name was also Ferdinand, and who was the rightful King of Naples. He had been driven from his kingdom, however, by the French, who claimed it as theirs by right. Ferdinand, driven from Naples, appealed for aid to his Spanish cousins, and they hastened to take up arms in his defence. They sent a powerful army to Italy under the command of Gonsalvo de Cordova, who was called "the Great Captain," because he was one of the most valiant and enterprising generals of his time. The Great Captain was fighting the French in Italy at the moment that Pizarro was enlisting at Seville.

The young adventurer soon found himself arrayed in the showy uniform of a private, and in due time, after having been carefully drilled, went with his company on board one of the transports. Eager to reach the scene of conflict, he impatiently awaited its departure. One morning the sails were spread, and the transport glided down the Guadalquivir, and out to sea. In a few hours the Strait of Gibraltar was passed; and then Pizarro saw the coast of his native land recede and disappear, and for the first time found himself out of sight of land.

He reached the scene of war just in time to take part

in its final conflicts, and to share in the brilliant triumphs of the Great Captain over his French enemies.

After the capture of Naples, and the restoration of King Ferdinand to his throne, the Spanish forces returned leisurely home, and Pizarro received the reward of his valour by being promoted to the rank of lieutenant.

He remained in the army several years, and gained each year in military reputation and experience. But his restless spirit could not suffer in patience the dull monotony of barrack life. As soon as he found that there was little prospect of further active service, his thoughts once more turned towards the new world in the West. There, at least, there would be occupation for his sword, and scope for his ambition. He longed for a life of bold adventure, of perpetual danger, and desperate conflict. As he heard the oft-repeated story of the beauty and riches of the far-off land, and of the chances it offered for conquest, power, and wealth, he burned to cross the ocean, and try his fortunes where so many seemed to prosper.

At last opportunity favoured Pizarro's aspirations. It was reported that an expedition would soon depart from Cadiz for Hispaniola, the commander of which needed a number of resolute men accustomed to arms, and willing to submit to the rude and perilous life of military adventure on the chance of winning wealth and fame. Pizarro hastened to join the party, to offer his sword and his life to the enterprise, and to embark upon one of the ships. In a few days the little fleet was tossing on the tempestuous billows of the Atlantic, and after a long and stormy voyage its destination was safely reached.

CHAPTER III.

PIZARRO IN THE NEW WORLD.

WHEN he arrived on the shores of the New World, Pizarro was no longer the raw and awkward but enthusiastic boy whom we have seen setting forth from his wretched home in search of a more exciting career. He was now a full-grown man, with a character toughened and matured by the hard service of military life, and a strength of body and mind acquired by rough contact with men. But the same strong ambition burned in his soul, and the same energy and perseverance which enabled him to escape from Truxillo now aided him in carving out for himself fame and power.

He found himself in the midst of sturdy adventurers like himself, seeking the same ends, and ready to brave every peril to accomplish them. Not only the islands of the West Indies, but the mainland of Central and South America, had already been to some extent explored by the earlier Spanish navigators. New expeditions were arriving from Spain every little while. The discoveries already made had been so brilliant as to kindle to a flame the cupidity and love of power of the strangers. Gold and precious stones had been found, conquests made over the natives; and the beauty of the islands had induced colonies to settle upon them, and had caused governments to be established under the authority of the Spanish crown.

Pizarro entered into the schemes of conquest which were constantly being planned around him with all the passionate ardour of his nature. He felt his own capacity to command, and he was determined to lose no chance of bettering his fortunes. His zeal and ability were soon observed and recognized. He was sought after by the chiefs of the expeditions to the mainlands, and ere long became a favourite with the soldiers, who, when he led them, learned to repose the most implicit confidence in him.

One of the boldest of the Spaniards at Hispaniola was a cavalier named Alonzo de Ojeda. He was famous for the spirit with which he assailed the armies of the natives, and the valour with which he often defeated them at overwhelming odds. A part of the mainland on the Isthmus of Darien had been divided into two provinces, and of one of these provinces Ojeda was appointed the governor. He knew Pizarro's courage and enterprise, and proposed that he should go with him to the province as second in command. The offer was just what Pizarro wished. He accepted it without hesitation, and shortly after sailed from Hispaniola with Ojeda and his little army.

On reaching the coast of the isthmus, Ojeda resolved to land at a place called by the Spaniards Cartagena, after the ancient town of that name in their own country. But one of his officers, De Coza, who had before visited the coast, warned him by no means to do so. The natives, he said, were very warlike, and bitterly hostile to the Spaniards. They were, moreover, very numerous in that region, and would soon make an end of Ojeda's little party. This news, far from dissuading the dauntless governor, only made him the more resolute to go on shore; and Pizarro, who was as ignorant of fear as his chief, gave his voice in favour of the venture. No sooner had the Spaniards landed than De Coza's prediction was realized. Swarms of Indians poured down from the hills and emerged from the forests, and as-

sailed the intruders with the wildest ferocity. De Coza himself was the first to fall, and ere an hour had passed no less than seventy Spaniards lay dead on the shore. The rest were forced back to their ships. But Ojeda, having been surrounded by the savages, with his giant's arm cut his way through them, and escaped, half dead with wounds, to the shelter of the woods. He was found the next day by a party of his men who had ventured upon shore to seek for him, and was carried, fainting, to his vessel.

He set sail at once, and did not again land until he had reached his new colony at San Sebastian. Here, however, Ojeda and his party suffered the severest hardships. Their provisions were soon exhausted, and the natives, who were as fierce and as implacable as those at Cartagena, perpetually attacked the settlement. The worst of it was that they used poisoned arrows, so that all the Spaniards who were wounded suffered a death of excruciating agony.

Ojeda, seeing that unless he received help his colony would soon be exterminated, decided to return to Hispaniola for recruits and provisions. On the eve of his departure he called Pizarro, and confided to him the command of the colony until he should return. But misfortune followed the poor little colony to the end. To crown their misfortunes, Ojeda, failing to get the succour he hoped for, never went back, but died soon after in extreme poverty and neglect. For fifty weary days Pizarro and his companions waited, expecting every day to see the welcome sails which would bring them relief. They subsisted mainly on palm-nuts and the flesh of wild hogs, which, though plentiful, were far from being healthful food; and every week saw their number lessened by disease and the poisoned arrows of the Indians.

Pizarro, indeed, would have returned to Hispaniola sooner than he did, had it not been that there was but one small ship left to him, and the colony was at first too numerous

to be transported on it ; so he waited until death had so far reduced their number as to enable him to embark with all the survivors.

A still more perilous expedition soon after attracted the ambition of Pizarro. Balboa, the captain-general of the colony of Darien, having heard through friendly natives that there existed a vast sea on the western side of the isthmus, determined to penetrate to its shores. He picked out one hundred and ninety of his bravest and sturdiest soldiers, armed them with arquebuses, swords, and cross-bows, and added to his forces a number of bloodhounds, which were of great though cruel service in fighting against the Indians. It is said that Balboa himself had a favourite bloodhound, which dealt such havoc among the savages that whenever the plunder was divided a portion was allotted to the valiant dog. His name was Leoncico ; and so much did Leoncico terrify the Indians, that they ran away as soon as he made his appearance.

Pizarro went with Balboa as one of his lieutenants, and shared in the glory as well as the dangers of this famous expedition. The first part of the journey was over steep and rocky mountains. There was no road, and the party was forced to move slowly, and to halt often to rest. The heavy armour of the soldiers, and the blazing sun of the tropics, made the ascent difficult and fatiguing. The mountains passed, they descended into dense entangled forests, and now and then encountered streams, which could only be crossed on rafts made hastily on the spot. A friendly chief named Ponca accompanied Balboa, and acted as his guide. One day, as they emerged from the woods, Ponca suddenly uttered a loud exclamation. Hurrying to Balboa, who with Pizarro was trudging sturdily forward in front of his men, the chief pointed to a lofty mountain that rose in the dim distance.

"There !" he cried : "when you have reached the top of

that big mountain, you will see the great ocean stretched out at your feet."

The peak which the Indian pointed out was still a great way off; but his words so thrilled Balboa and his comrades that they pushed forward rapidly, eager to catch a glimpse of the mighty waters now screened by the high ranges from their view.

Unfortunately the provisions of the Spaniards now gave out, and they were footsore from their long tramp; and, to make their situation yet more serious, they had now reached a country hostile to Ponca and the Europeans. They were assailed with great ferocity, the Indians showering spears, arrows, and clubs upon them. But these Indians had never heard or seen a gun go off; and when Pizarro, leading on the men, ordered them to fire, and the volley with its flash and smoke thundered upon the savages, they ran shrieking and howling away. No less than six hundred of them, including their chief, were killed; and, their rout being complete, the Spaniards entered their village unopposed, and found not only an abundance of food, but a rare treasure of gold and jewels.

Balboa, on resuming his way toward the mountain, left a number of his men behind in the Indian village. His force was now reduced to sixty-seven. He was still accompanied by his faithful lieutenant, Pizarro.

It was just at daybreak, on a bright September morning, that the adventurers, guided by Ponca and other friendly Indians, began their ascent of the mountain. There was no path, and at first their march lay through dense woods, so tangled with brush that the men stumbled at almost every step. After several hours, however, they emerged from this wood into open and rocky ground, where they could mount far more easily. It was so cold here that vegetation could not grow. Just before them towered in solitary grandeur a lofty, bare, jagged peak, far above the surrounding emi-

nences. This was the peak from the summit of which, Ponca said, the ocean could be seen.

Balboa, with throbbing heart, gazed long at the mighty crag. If it were indeed true that another ocean was visible from its crest, he would be its discoverer, and would be renowned and honoured throughout Europe.

"My men," he said, "do you rest here. I must ascend alone to the summit. My eyes must be the first to behold the vast ocean which rolls beyond."

He then walked forward, and began to climb lightly and eagerly up the precipitous cliffs, while his companions watched him with breathless interest from below. Ere long his sturdy figure was seen standing on the summit, his plumes waving in the upper air.

Before him, in truth, lay spread out the limitless waters to the dim horizon. The waves dashed with a roar and rush against the crags at the foot of the mountain ; and, looking to the east and the west, Balboa could discern rich and beautiful lands stretching down to the water's edge.

His first impulse was to fall upon his knees, lift his hands heavenward, and thank God for his good fortune. Then he rose, and excitedly beckoned to his comrades to come up to him. They darted forward, and scrambled wildly up the rocks, Pizarro at their head ; and he was the second European whose eyes greeted the Pacific Ocean.

The sounds of joy and thanksgiving filled the air. Men and leaders frantically embraced each other without respect to rank ; a priest began to sing a *Te Deum* in a loud voice ; and then Balboa, turning to the noble panorama before him, solemnly took possession of the ocean and the surrounding countries in the name of King Ferdinand of Spain. He caused trees to be cut down and made into a cross, which his men planted on the very spot where he stood when he first beheld the ocean.

The Spaniards now descended the mountain, bent on ex-

ploring the shores of the Pacific. They here and there encountered savage and hostile tribes, but with their guns and their bloodhounds easily overcame them.

After meeting with many adventures on the coast, naming several bays and towns, visiting the villages of friendly chiefs, collecting a goodly amount of gold and gems, and taking possession of the country in the name of the king, Balboa, with Pizarro, returned in safety and triumph across the isthmus to Darien.

The tidings of his discoveries caused the greatest excitement in the colony, and the treasure he brought aroused the envy of all who saw it.

Soon after Balboa's arrival at Darien, a new governor of that settlement, named Pedrarias, came from Spain to take Balboa's place. Balboa, instead of resisting him as he might have done, welcomed him with due honour; but as soon as Pedrarias, who was vain and ambitious, heard of the gallant cavalier's great achievements, and the affection and respect in which he was held in the colony, he became very jealous. When Balboa told him of all that he had done, and proposed to lead a new expedition to the shores of the Pacific, Pedrarias pretended to consent to the project; but no sooner had Balboa set about his preparations than the governor gruffly refused to let him go, and even threatened to arrest and throw him into prison.

Pedrarias coveted the glory of future discoveries, and the lion's share of the treasure that might be obtained, for himself. So he fitted out an expedition of his own, and gave the command to a cousin of his, named Morales; but as Morales was quite ignorant of the country and the Indians, Pedrarias was forced to choose some one familiar with both, to share the command with him.

Pizarro was selected for this office, and in due time the expedition set forth across the isthmus. They reached the shores of the Pacific in safety. Pizarro, who had already

been on that part of the coast, pointed out to Morales a group of islands, lying not far out to sea, where he had heard it reported a great quantity of pearls might be obtained. Leaving half of their force on the mainland, the two chiefs set out in canoes for the islands with the rest. The canoes were several times nearly capsized ; but the largest island was at last reached, and the adventurers landed. The natives, who had perceived them coming, and had guessed that they were not bent on an errand of peace, fiercely attacked them ; and it was only after much hard fighting that the Spaniards were able to make their position on the island secure. They then searched for pearls, and were rewarded with obtaining not only a vast number of these precious stones of large size and brilliancy, but a large quantity of gold. Pizarro named the place the "Isle of Pearls," which is the name it bears to this day.

The return of the party of Morales and Pizarro, with their glowing stories of the west coast and the golden evidences of its wealth, excited Pedrarias's cupidity and ambition to the highest pitch. He resolved to remove the seat of government from Darien across the isthmus, and chose what is now known as Panama as the future capital of the province.

Pizarro went with the governor, and having now become well-to-do with his share of the booty obtained in the expeditions whose perils he had shared, he bought a house and lands near Panama, was served by a retinue of Indian servants, and was held in high distinction as one of the cavaliers who had taken a conspicuous part in conquering and settling the country.

But a quiet and monotonous life, though prosperous and attended with ease and comfort, did not satisfy the bold and adventurous spirit of our hero. He could not settle down with content into the placid career of a gentleman farmer. He longed for the stirring actions of the battle-field, for the hazards and excitements of wandering through wild, strange

lands, discovering unknown seas and nations, and procuring, at the risk of life, the treasures hidden beyond difficult and dangerous journeyings. As he overlooked his fields and flocks, he pondered on the marvellous stories he had heard oft repeated, of countries beyond the coast, which faded, as he looked, in the dim distance—countries where there were temples filled with massive ornaments of gold and jewels, and which would reward their conqueror with fabulous riches and unlimited power and glory. He dreamed by day and by night visions of a possible future in which he should act a leading part in brilliant discovery and the acquisition of unguessed treasures ; when men would speak of him as they spoke of his gallant chief Balboa, and when the world would ring with his praises as it was just now ringing with those of his cousin Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico. Now and then, indeed, he led expeditions at short distances from Panama to conquer a hostile chief or occupy a desirable part of the country ; but these sallies were far from satisfying his ambitious spirit, and only made him the more restlessly eager to achieve something really great and famous.

He was now over forty years old, and in the full vigour of body and mind. He felt the most perfect confidence in his own energy, perseverance, and courage, and he awaited with impatience an opportunity to set forth once more in pursuit of a higher fortune than he had as yet attained.

It happened that while Pizarro was thus chafing under the dull round of his farm life at Panama, a voyager named Andagoya came into port, after a long and unsuccessful voyage to the south of that town. Andagoya had gone farther southward than any previous navigator. He had found islands scattered along the coasts, had landed at several points, and had communicated with men superior in aspect and intelligence to the Indians with whom the Spaniards were familiar on the isthmus. He had seen, besides, the mighty chain of the Cordilleras rising, as it seemed, to the very clouds, their

peaks crested with eternal snow, and their range completely shutting in, as far as eye could reach, the lands that lay beyond. Andagoya had been told that behind the Cordilleras there was a country abounding in riches of every kind ; that it was a land of gold ; and that, moreover, its condition was such that it might be conquered by a band of determined and fearless warriors.

Pizarro listened to this story with beating heart. He could no longer resist the impulse to stake life, health, and fortune in a new and great enterprise. Unhappily, though rich enough to live in comfort at Panama, he had not the means to fit out ships and store them, to hire and equip a large number of men, and to provide for a long absence from the colony. In this strait he looked about him to see if he could find any one to join him in the expense and risk of an expedition. Happily, Andagoya's tale had roused the ambition and cupidity of others in Panama besides Pizarro.

Among those who became eager to explore the southern seas was a generous-hearted and honest though quick-tempered cavalier, named Diego de Almagro. He was a man of position and note ; and no sooner had Pizarro proposed an expedition to him than Almagro readily agreed to join in his project. The two then resorted to a rich and ambitious priest, Hernando de Luque, the vicar of Panama, whom they urged to unite with them in the undertaking, and to furnish the necessary funds for buying, equipping, and manning the ships. Luque readily yielded to their entreaty, agreed to supply the money, and to accept his share of the booty which might be taken by the expedition as repayment. Pizarro and Almagro next resorted to Pedrarias, the governor, who, in spite of his jealousy, gave his sanction to the enterprise.

Preparations were begun without delay. To Pizarro was intrusted the command of the expedition, and two small ships were purchased. It was Almagro's task to see that they were properly fitted and provisioned for the perilous voyage,

and to enlist the men whom Pizarro needed to accompany him. Almagro took care to select the hardiest and most experienced soldiers and sailors that he could find, and succeeded, by dint of effort, in raising a force of one hundred and twelve. With so small an army the brave Pizarro was to set out to conquer what might prove a new continent. He never faltered in his purpose, however, but urged Almagro to complete every arrangement at the earliest possible moment.

At last Almagro announced that all was ready. The little ships lay in the harbour of Panama, gay with their new rigging and fresh paint, loaded down with what seemed an ample store of provisions and other necessities, and provided each with a full and stalwart crew.

It only remained for the captain to bid adieu to the governor and his friends, to go on board, and give the order to sail out upon the unknown seas.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GOLDEN LAND.

LET us transport ourselves in fancy beyond the mighty barrier of the Cordilleras, and observe the mysterious land which had kindled Pizarro's ambition, and to reach and subdue which he was ready to brave every peril and make every sacrifice.

It was indeed a marvellous country, exceeding in many respects the most glowing pictures of the savages who had described it to Andagoya—a country most fertile, romantic in scenery, with a skilfully devised government, noble edifices, aqueducts, roads, and bridges, and actually teeming with wealth.

Extending through thirty-nine degrees from north to south on the west coast of South America, Peru presented, as it still presents, an exceedingly curious and striking aspect to the traveller. A very narrow strip of land, fifteen hundred miles from north to south, and in its widest part only about sixty miles, stretched along the coast of the Pacific, and was bounded on the east by the lofty and apparently unbroken chain of the snow-crested Cordilleras, which shut it completely out from the continent beyond.

The empire of Peru, indeed, extended to the other side of the mountains ; but its principal seat, and all its larger cities and towns, were upon this long, narrow strip between the mountains and the ocean.

The country at first sight did not seem fitted for cultivation. The soil near the coast was sandy, and there appeared but little fruitful space between the rather barren shore and the craggy and jagged sides and spurs of the Cordilleras.

But it had for several centuries been inhabited by an energetic and almost civilized race. Aqueducts, canals, and bridges had been constructed; the sides of the mountains had been transformed by long and patient labour into terraces, which, rising one above the other as far as the eye could reach, supported luxuriant gardens and farms, rich in the fruits, flowers, shrubs, and vegetables of almost every degree of climate and temperature; while over the pastures roamed vast flocks of the shaggy Peruvian sheep, the "llamas"—animals never seen by Europeans until the advent of Pizarro and his little army.

On the plateaux and among the lofty crags and cliffs, as well as on the sloping plain, nestled thrifty towns and villages, between which lay wide and well-constructed highroads that passed in straight lines over the level expanse as far as the horizon, and wound up broad zigzags by the mountain spurs.

The land of Peru was ruled by a powerful monarch called the Inca. The Inca was not only the sovereign of the Peruvians, but was believed by them to be more than a mortal. The Peruvians worshipped the Sun, and the Inca was supposed to be the descendant of the orb of day.

It was said that the Sun, in order to give prosperity and civilization to his chosen people, had sent his son and daughter among them to give them a knowledge of the arts by which they might increase in riches, population, and power.

The names of this celestial brother and sister were Manco Capac and Mama Oello. While the brother, having founded his capital at Cuzco, in the centre of the country, instructed the Peruvian men how to cultivate their farms and gardens, to supply themselves with water, to build roads, and to erect temples, the sister, Mama Oello, took the women under her

tutelage, and taught them the feminine arts of weaving, spinning, housekeeping, and the proper bringing-up of children.

Thus the empire of Peru, according to tradition, was founded by the children of the Sun. The Incas were their descendants. The son of Manco Capac succeeded to the throne of his celestial father; and so the realm had passed down without a break from father to son to the time of Pizarro. They had not confined themselves to the dominions of Manco Capac, but by continual wars had made many conquests, until their empire occupied the great extent of country which was ruled by the Peruvian monarch when the Spaniards came.

The name "Inca" was applied not only to the reigning sovereign, but to all the descendants of Manco Capac. Thus there had grown up a numerous nobility or caste, all of whom boasted their sacred origin from the Sun, and who held all the high places, military and civil, in the state.

The future monarch of Peru was carefully trained for his high destiny. He was obliged to pass through a severe course of study; to become skilful in wrestling, boxing, running, and in the use of warlike weapons; and to prove in severe examinations his capacity to rule over the empire. When once upon the throne, however, his power was absolute. Being a descendant of the Sun, he was placed far above his subjects, and his word was a divine law.

Even the Inca nobles could not appear in his presence except standing, with uncovered head and bare feet, and carrying a burden as a sign of their abject inferiority.

The Inca was not only the monarch but the high priest of his people. He imposed religious doctrines as well as worldly laws. He took care, moreover, to constantly impress his unapproachable greatness upon his subjects. Whenever he appeared among them, it was with the most dazzling pomp and imposing ceremony. Attired in rich cloths of many hues, glittering with gold and jewels, his brow encircled with

a bright red fringe, from which arose two enormous plumes plucked from a sacred bird, he showed himself at solemn religious festivals and brilliant banquets, or travelled through the country on magnificent litters, borne by stately nobles, and attended by a host of gaily attired cavaliers. Palaces were scattered throughout the empire to serve as halting-places when the Inca made his journeys.

Some of these royal palaces, indeed, were magnificent. If you had approached one of them, you would have seen a long, low building of stone, roofed with wood, and would not have been struck by its appearance. But, once within the doors, you would have been fairly bewildered and dazzled by its adornment. You would have observed that in the walls were fitted finely fashioned devices in silver and gold, and that in alcoves at frequent intervals statues of the same precious metals were placed. There were hangings of gorgeous cloths, and the Inca was served, when he dined in these palaces, upon heavy gold plate, and with pitchers and ewers thickly studded with large-sized gems.

At more than one royal residence were to be seen luxuriant gardens with real plants and flowers of every size and hue, and just among them other plants and flowers of gold and silver, carved in minute imitation of nature. Here, too, were baths, fed by waters which flowed through silver pipes into broad basins of shining gold.

Nor were the principal temples of Peru less splendid than the palaces in which the Inca kept his imperial state. Not the sun only, but the moon, the stars, the thunder and lightning, and the rainbow were worshipped by the Peruvians; and there were sanctuaries dedicated to them all.

Noblest and most superb among these temples was that which stood in Cuzco, the capital of the empire, and which was called both "The Temple of the Sun" and "The Place of Gold." It was of stone, and surrounded by a high wall; but, as in most Peruvian edifices, its chief decorations were

in the interior. On one of the walls blazed an enormous effigy of the Sun, in burnished gold, the glittering rays shooting out from the central orb to the remotest corner of the ceiling and down to the very floor. The orb itself was fashioned to represent the face of the deity, and upon it appeared many brilliant jewels. The other walls were almost concealed behind the huge golden ornaments fastened into them, and the cornice of the temple consisted of massive bars of gold.

Another temple, dedicated to the Moon, had a similar effigy of that luminary ; only this was made of shining silver. Each sacred edifice throughout the empire presented a like lavish display of precious metals. The vases, censers, and ewers, the pipes, reservoirs, and utensils, were all of silver and gold.

The Inca, while his rule was absolute, seldom exercised it with tyranny or even harshness. The Peruvians were a gentle, docile, industrious race : they submitted to his divinely descended despotism without a murmur, and received its laws with serene and perfect obedience.

The empire was divided into four provinces, and these were subdivided into districts containing a thousand, five hundred, and one hundred people. Over the provinces governors were appointed, always from among the Inca nobles ; and Inca nobles also ruled over the lesser provinces, except when foreign provinces had been conquered, over which were placed native chiefs called "curacas," who became loyal to the Inca.

The laws which the Incas imposed upon their people were very different from those of Europe. Theirs was a most methodical and orderly government. They punished theft, adultery, murder, the burning of a bridge, and curses uttered against the sovereign with death. The entire empire was divided into three kinds of lands—those for the Sun, for the Inca, and for the people.

The lands devoted to the Sun and the Inca were cultivated in turn by all the inhabitants, and their revenues were employed to support the temples, priesthood, and religious rites and festivals, and to maintain the monarch in his splendour. The lands left for the people were divided up among them in equal portions. When a Peruvian married, as he was bound by law to do at a certain age, a hut and piece of land were assigned to him to cultivate and subsist upon. The farms were re-divided every year. So it was that no Peruvian could rise above the moderate comfort to which he was entitled as a subject of the Inca.

The holder of a farm could neither sell any portion of it, nor could he purchase other land and add to it. From month to month, and from year to year, he grew no richer, nor did he grow poorer.

The Peruvian was obliged first to till the fields belonging to the Sun; then to aid in cultivating the land of those of his neighbours who were old, infirm, or sick; then he could occupy himself with his own acres; finally he went to work his share upon the lands of the Inca. All the sheep in Peru, and the manufactures of wool from them, were entirely the property of the Sun and the Inca. When the sheep were shorn, the wool was collected in the imperial storehouses, and distributed equally among the population. The women in all the Peruvian homes spun and wove it into cloth; this was again collected, and distributed for clothing throughout the empire. In the same way the mines belonged to the Inca, and were worked for his and the common benefit.

The various occupations and trades—carpentry, mining, masonry, and so on—usually descended from father to son; and each artisan, supplied by the government with the material for his labour, was obliged to work during a certain period each year for the general benefit. From these laws it may be seen how systematic and orderly was the rule of the

Incas, what power they had over their people, and how it was that individual wealth and poverty were alike unknown among the masses in Peru.

A few years before Pizarro resolved to try his fortunes in an expedition to the south, a warlike and vigorous Inca, named Huayna Capac, was reigning in Peru. He had extended his empire over a large and flourishing country called Quito, which lay just north of his hereditary dominions; and, by his enterprise and energetic rule, Peru had reached its highest limit of wealth and power. Huayna had two sons by different wives. To the elder, Huascar, he left the empire of Peru; to the younger, his favourite son, Atahualpa, he bequeathed the throne of Quito. For a short time the two brothers lived and reigned quietly in their respective realms. They continued the works begun by their father; and it seemed as if the two countries would continue to advance side by side in their career of high prosperity. Huascar, the new Inca, was of a gentle and peaceful temper, and did not begrudge his brother the fine possessions which their father had confided to him. But Atahualpa inherited the bold spirit and the warlike qualities of Huayna. Though younger than Huascar, and really not entitled even to Quito, he was bitterly chagrined because Huascar instead of himself reigned over the ancient realm of the Incas.

Not long after he came to the throne Atahualpa began to raise armies, and to make attacks upon his neighbours, adding the provinces he conquered to his own kingdom. At first he very carefully avoided giving the Inca Huascar cause for alarm. But soon Huascar began to suspect that Atahualpa fostered designs on Peru itself; and, after mutual misunderstanding had once arisen between the brothers, a cause of quarrel was not far to seek. Atahualpa was a handsome young man of noble and soldierly bearing, impetuous, and as brave as a lion. He not only rushed, with the veterans who had served his father so valiantly, into the thickest of

the battle, but he was free, generous, and indulgent to them, and thus completely won their hearts.

The first assault was made by Huascar, who invaded the territory of Quito, and, after a fierce conflict, not only routed Atahualpa, but took him prisoner. But Atahualpa soon escaped, and returning to his kingdom, made haste to restore and swell the ranks of his defeated army. The soldiers were only too eager to follow him once more against the Inca. He marched them rapidly southward, and, meeting Huascar with a formidable force at the foot of Mount Chimborazo, the loftiest peak of the Cordilleras, utterly defeated and put him to flight. Pursuing the retreating Peruvians, Atahualpa entered, sacked, and razed Tumebamba, one of his brother's chief cities, and savagely massacred its people, young and old. Then he advanced, desolating the country in his pathway with fire and sword, and established his camp at Caxamalca. From thence he sent his main army forward under the command of two veteran generals. They met the hosts of Huascar on a broad plain a short distance from Cuzco, his capital. There then ensued a desperate and terrible battle, which resulted in a second and still more fatal disaster to the Inca, whose army was routed in the wildest disorder, whose capital was seized and plundered, and who was himself taken prisoner.

Atahualpa's triumph now seemed complete; but he used it with barbaric cruelty. He ordered his brother to be thrown into a dungeon in a distant fortress; he summoned a large concourse of Inca nobles to Cuzco, and, when they were gathered there, ordered them to be massacred without mercy; and crowning himself with the imperial diadem, he declared himself to be the Inca of Peru.

Such was the condition of the Peruvian empire at the moment that Pizarro, with the aid of his faithful friends Almagro and Luque, was preparing to sail in two small ships, and with a resolute band of soldiers, in the direction of its shores.

CHAPTER V.

PIZARRO'S DEPARTURE.

ON the morning of the 14th of November 1524 the little town of Panama was alive with unusual commotion. The day was misty and chilly ; yet the people, consisting not only of Spaniards, but of Indians clad in every variety of native costume, flocked into the streets, as if something unusual were about to take place.

The town lay upon a projecting point of the coast, and was surrounded by a high stone wall. Out in the lovely bay, which was not less beautiful in its contour and its surroundings than the famous Bay of Naples, the sparkling waters were dotted with hilly isles, densely covered to their very summits with rich tropical trees and shrubs ; while far off on the other side the dim outlines of lofty mountains were visible, their peaks rising above the floating clouds.

From the centre of the most thickly populated quarter rose the towers of the cathedral, then very new, the ruins of which may still be seen by the traveller in that southern region ; and it was in the direction of this edifice that the motley throng of soldiers, sailors, planters, shopkeepers, fortune-hunters, desperadoes, Indians, women and children, was drifting.

The cathedral was soon crowded to its utmost capacity. Near the high altar, with white-plumed and blue velvet cap, stood the gaunt and grim-looking Pedrarias, the governor of

the colony. Just by his side was seen the tall, sturdy figure, and dark, resolute face, of Francisco Pizarro, also attired in a handsome costume, while a long sword hung at his side, and a shining cuirass covered his breast. A little behind Pizarro was stationed the short form of Almagro, his friend, whose countenance betrayed the earnestness and fire of his nature.

For a little while silence reigned through the cathedral. Then a stout, prosperous-looking priest with large and bright black eyes and pleasant face, arrayed in the robes of his sacred office, advanced, and kneeled at the high altar. This priest, had he been seen in another place, and in a more worldly garb, would have been taken rather for an enterprising merchant, or even an adventurous soldier, than for a minister of souls. It was Luque, Pizarro's stanch friend, and his partner in the venture that was about to be made.

Presently the priest's voice was heard chanting the solemn service of the mass. The song of the choir echoed through the cathedral; and then Luque, turning towards Pizarro, stretched forth his arms, and in loud, deep, earnest tones blessed him, and bade him God-speed in his dangerous voyage. He then administered to him the holy sacrament, and the ceremony was at an end.

A procession was now formed, the governor Pedrarias marching at the head, with Pizarro at his side. Behind them went the soldiers and men who had been enlisted for the voyage; and these, in turn, were followed by a large concourse of soldiers and people.

Arrived on the shores of the bay, Pizarro took leave of the governor, who, though jealous of the gallant captain, concealed his feelings, and warmly bade him farewell, embraced his good friends Almagro and Luque, and, amid the shouts of the throng gathered on the quay, went on board the larger of the two ships that lay at anchor.

It was not long before the men had all embarked; and the

moment arrived to weigh anchor, to spread sails, and put out to sea. As the ships glided out of the harbour, a loud clamour of shouts rent the air. Flags were waved, and guns fired off, and the tall figure of Pizarro was seen erect on his quarter-deck, saluting the crowd with his plumed hat, until he and the ships faded out of sight in the still brooding mist.

Pizarro had boldly committed his fortunes and his life to the great deep, and to the perils sure to be encountered in strange and savage lands. His bold heart beat high as he thought of the glorious prospect of success; nor did it for a moment shrink before the dread possibilities of disaster and defeat. He knew almost nothing of the region to which he was going, but trusted firmly in his good fortune and his pluck to conquer every obstacle. The little ships pushed bravely out to sea, and soon every landmark of the town and bay was lost to sight. Reaching the Isle of Pearls, where Pizarro had once obtained so many precious jewels, and to which he had given its name, he anchored there a little while; and then resuming his voyage, he sailed southward toward the continent, where, according to the stories he had heard, he would find the riches he so ardently sought.

In a few days, as the ships sped along the coast, they doubled a promontory, on the other side of which Pizarro espied the mouth of a river. Resolved to explore every part of the coast, lest he should miss the country of which he was in search, he ordered the ships to sail up this stream as far as they could. It proved to be navigable for about six miles. They cast anchor, and Pizarro landed upon the unknown shore with all his soldiers to explore the country round about.

He found himself in a strange and forbidding place. Dismal swamps, overgrown with rank and tangled shrubs, stretched out before him and his comrades on every side as far as the eye could reach; and after crossing these, they came to a rough, craggy, barren region, which was as deso-

late and as difficult to cross as the marshes had been. There were no signs anywhere of human habitation; and after several days employed in tedious and fruitless marches under a blazing sun, the party returned footsore and weary to the ships.

Once more they put out to sea, and continued to skirt as near to the shore as it was safe to do. It was not many days before their eyes were gladdened by another inlet. Here Pizarro put in, in order not only to explore the region, but to renew his supply of wood and water. But the place was not less lonely and unattractive than that they had before visited; so, after taking in wood and water, they resumed their voyage.

Hitherto, in spite of the inclement season of the year, the weather had not been unfavourable to the expedition. But they had no sooner struck into the open sea than a furious tempest assailed the ships. It burst upon them suddenly. Thunder rolled in deafening peals across the black and heavy masses of clouds, while the sharp and quick succeeding flashes of lightning lit up the sea and firmament, as if to show the adventurers the frightful aspects of the storm in which they were enveloped. The poor little ships creaked and groaned, and as each tremendous billow struck and dashed over their sides, making them shake and tremble, and deluging the men with salt water, it seemed as if every moment would see them staved in and shattered by the shock.

Pizarro, in the midst of the tempest, was as patient and calm as if he had been quietly reposing in his house at Panama. His men at first raved and cursed in their terror; but he went among them and cheered them, and soon shamed them into submission by his own dauntless courage.

The storm grew more and more terrible. Day waned and night came, and the waves still rose to awful heights, the wind swelled to a hurricane, and the ships drifted and plunged helplessly whithersoever the frenzied elements carried them.

For a week the tempest continued to rage with a fury that only abated a few moments at a time. And now another calamity was added to the dangers of shipwreck.

Almagro had stored the ships with what he thought an ample supply of provisions, but he had supposed that the voyagers would be able to renew it from time to time by procuring food at the places on the coast where they would land. But they had as yet found nothing to sustain life, and their provisions and water were almost exhausted. They had now before them the danger not only of foundering at sea, but, even if they were spared this fate, of dying by starvation. Each man's rations were reduced to two ears of corn, and this scant sustenance Pizarro cheerfully shared with the humblest of his comrades.

The storm happily ceased a few days after the provisions fell short; and the captain, ignorant of what lay beyond, resolved to put back to the inlet where he had taken in wood and water. There, at least, they would be safe on dry land; they would repair the disabled ships; and it might be that, by exploring farther inland than they had done, food would be found.

On reaching the inlet, all hands disembarked and made preparations for a longer sojourn. Their situation, indeed, was far from promising. Having escaped the terrors of the sea, new trials and miseries seemed to await them on shore. A desolate tract of marsh and forest lay stretched out before them. Already over thirty of the stalwart band which had set out from Panama had died, and Pizarro found that he had but eighty faithful followers left to share his dangers and hardships. He divided these into parties, who scoured the country and penetrated as far as they could through the tangled growths that lay beyond the swamps. But one and all returned with the same mournful story, that neither inhabitants nor food were anywhere to be found.

Pizarro was resolved to take a desperate course. Undis-

mayed by his situation, and firmly set on not returning to Panama, where the news of his failure would be received with jeers and contempt, he sent the smaller of his ships, under a faithful officer named Montenegro, back to the Isle of Pearls for provisions; while he himself, with the larger part of his men, remained on the dismal coast. He trusted to his good fortune to survive till the ship should return; and by continually picturing to his comrades the glory and riches in store for them, persuaded them to be content to stay with him.

He expected Montenegro to come back at least within a fortnight. But the fortnight passed, then three weeks, then a month; and as the poor little company of adventurers stood on the coast and strained their eyes northward, no friendly sail, promising food for their empty stomachs and drink for their parched lips, greeted their sight.

Nothing could exceed the misery which Pizarro and his comrades suffered during this long and terrible suspense. Confined to a barren and unhealthy shore, with scarcely any provisions, and water so bad that it poisoned and sometimes killed those who drank it, with scant shelter from the storms that often swept over them, and the hope of seeing the ship of succour appear constantly postponed, it seemed as if one and all were doomed to a slow death of torture on this remote and lonely spot. At last they were reduced to the most desperate extremities. The small stock of corn became exhausted, and the half-famished creatures greedily ate the salt seaweed that the waves washed upon the beach, and bitter palm-berries, and even the tanned cowhide which covered the ship's pump, and which they boiled, divided, and devoured as best they could. Day by day Pizarro saw his company dwindling before his eyes. Scarcely a day passed that one or two did not die of sheer starvation, while the rest became gaunt and haggard, and were gradually reduced to little more than skeletons.

The brave captain, however, still kept up a stout heart. He shared with the rest their repulsive food; he tended the sick, and administered such medicines as he had with his own hand; he piled up soft beds for them with brush and leaves; he caused huts to be erected, and himself assisted in putting them up, so that some shelter might be afforded from the frequent tempests; and by constantly going among them, showing his deep sorrow for their miseries, cheering them by his words of hope, and setting them a bright example of patience and indomitable resolution, he quite won their hearts even in the midst of their distress. One day, as Pizarro was going about, relieving as best he could the pains of the sick, two or three of his men came running up, and eagerly told him they had seen a light a great way off through the trees. He at once started out with a party of a dozen, and soon, sure enough, saw a faint glimmering in the distance. Making his way as best he could through the tangled forest, he at last reached an opening, and to his surprise and delight found there a group of Indian huts. The savages, frightened out of their wits on seeing the Spaniards, ran away into the woods as fast as their legs could carry them, but, gathering confidence, they soon returned to the edge of the open space.

Pizarro and his men lost no time in entering the huts, and were overjoyed to find in them some cocoa-nuts and corn. They loaded themselves with as much as they could carry, and were on the point of returning, when several of the Indians, advancing, bitterly complained, by expressive signs, of the robbery, and asked Pizarro why the Spaniards had come to plunder their peaceful village.

He replied, in the same way, that he and his men were starving, and that it was necessary that they should take whatever food they could find. He then asked them many questions, and they told him that beyond the mountains there was a land abounding in riches.

The Spaniards observed that these savages wore heavy ornaments of gold ; and this entirely confirmed their belief in a golden country, and restored ambition and cupidity to their flagging souls. They returned to their companions aglow with the story of their discovery, and filled them with joy by displaying the corn and cocoa-nuts they had taken.

It was not until the forty-seventh day after its departure that Montenegro's ship, returning over the ocean, gladdened the eyes of Pizarro's still half-famished party. When they saw the sails in the distance, they capered, weak as they were, wildly about on the beach ; and when at last Montenegro cast anchor, they rushed out into the sea to embrace their comrades, and devour the good things which were thrown overboard to them. Montenegro had brought an ample supply of corn and pork, but told a harrowing tale of the hardships he and his crew had suffered on their way back from the Isle of Pearls.

Refreshed by the provisions which Montenegro had brought, and reinforced by his ship and men, Pizarro left the place where he and his comrades had spent so many dismal days, and which he expressively named the "Port of Famine," and continued his voyage southward along the coast.

Resolved to push his discoveries as far as possible, he passed several harbours which looked inviting, and did not cast anchor again until he came to a place where there were indications of habitation. Here he went ashore with his soldiers, and finding none of the difficulties in penetrating the country which he had experienced at the Port of Famine, he marched rapidly forward. Everywhere he saw signs of the presence of human beings ; and he was not surprised when, emerging from a thicket, he saw an Indian village, surrounded by palisades, on the crest of a hill before him.

Pizarro's first impulse was to attack the village ; but before he did so, he sent Montenegro forward to explore the neighbourhood. While his lieutenant was gone on this errand,

the captain, knowing that his ship had been badly disabled by the tempests through which she had passed, ordered a few of the sailors to take her back to Panama for repairs. Thus he cut off from his party a retreat by sea.

The savage inhabitants of the village, on espying the Spaniards, had run away into the bushes as those at the Port of Famine had done; but the sequel proved that they were a far bolder race. Montenegro, after proceeding some way, was suddenly assailed by the Indians, who rushed out of their hiding-places, and with loud cries fired a perfect shower of arrows among the Spaniards.

The latter were completely surprised, and at first lost their presence of mind. Quickly recovering, however, they drew their swords, and fell fiercely upon the enemy. The Indians were driven pell-mell into the woods again, but not until three of the Spaniards had been killed and several wounded.

It was now Pizarro's turn to suffer from the valour of the warlike natives. Gathering in a dense mass, the Indians hastened to assail him before Montenegro's force could return to his aid. Before he knew it, a storm of arrows assailed his little camp; and this was attended with hideous yells, which struck as much terror to the heart as the rude weapons themselves.

Pizarro was too brave a man to wait patiently for the onset of the Indians. His blood was up; and, calling upon his men to follow him, he leaped over the barricade which he had caused to be erected, and with naked sword ran forward to meet the savage foe.

The Indians saw by his bearing and air of command that he was the Spanish chief. They directed their whole fire upon him, and, as he was struggling valiantly, inflicted seven wounds upon him under his armour. Pizarro faltered, and then fell.

The savages, with an exultant cry of joy, rushed upon him to kill him. But the heroic cavalier, seeing their design,

sprang lightly to his feet, and despatched two of the advancing Indians with his sword. The rest he held at bay until his soldiers could come up ; and just at this moment the day was saved, and defeat turned into victory, by the timely arrival of the faithful Montenegro. The victory, however, was won at the cost of five Spaniards killed and seventeen wounded.

It seemed hopeless to proceed farther in the expedition. The hostility of the natives had been aroused ; Pizarro's force had been woefully reduced by disease and battle ; the provisions were running short ; and the remaining ship was not in a fit condition to pursue the voyage farther south.

Pizarro, therefore, sorrowfully ordered his men to embark, and the ship's prow was once more turned towards Panama. The weather being favourable, the voyage was made rapidly and safely, and ere many days the lovely Isle of Pearls came again in sight. But Pizarro was unwilling to return to Panama and meet Pedrarias with his story of failure. So he cast anchor in the little port of Chuchama, on the mainland opposite the Isle of Pearls ; and landing his men there, he sent his treasurer forward to the city in the ship to carry to the governor the golden ornaments he had taken from the Indians, while he and his comrades awaited at a distance the course of events.

CHAPTER VI.

PIZARRO'S SECOND VENTURE.

SOON after his arrival at Chuchama, Pizarro learned with surprise that his friend Almagro, alarmed for his safety, had shortly before set sail with seventy men to traverse the southern seas in search of him. The ships, it seems, had passed, but missed each other ; and now Almagro was doubtless wandering up and down the coast of South America in despair at not finding those for whom he was seeking.

Pizarro wisely refrained from putting himself in the jealous Pedrarias's power. He remained quietly where he was, and awaited, as patiently as he could, Almagro's return. After several weeks, he was rejoiced to see the welcome sails of his friend's ship in the distance. Almagro entered the harbour, cast anchor, and was soon locked in Pizarro's embrace.

He had a tale of startling adventure and strange vicissitude to tell. In the course of his voyage he had landed at several points on the coast, where he had found traces of Pizarro's presence ; and at the place where Pizarro had fought with the Indians, narrowly escaping with his life, Almagro had also engaged them in a terrific combat, in the course of which a dart had entered one of his eyes, and put it out.

Almagro had, moreover, sailed a considerable distance farther southward than Pizarro. He had entered the mouth of a beautiful river, and found himself in a country which seemed a perfect fairyland. Here he had taken a great

quantity of gold ornaments from the terrified natives, and had brought back with him a precious cargo, which made Pizarro's eyes glisten when Almagro displayed it to him.

The friends, delighted with the discoveries they had already made, and certain that beyond the farthest places they had visited there lay a country teeming with gold and gems, resolved on the spot that they would lose no time, and shrink from no sacrifice, in fitting out another and larger expedition.

But in the ill-nature and jealousy of Pedrarias, the governor, they had a very serious obstacle to overcome. When Almagro went to Panama, and besought his consent and aid, Pedrarias replied with a dark frown,—

"No; I will not permit you to go on any more fools' errands. You have lost men, and exhausted supplies; and all you have brought back are a few pitiful trinkets. Your golden country is a dream. I need all the men I can enlist for more solid enterprises. You must abandon your crazy project."

Almagro was in despair. He hastened to his good friend the priest Luque, and told him what Pedrarias had said.

"Cheer up," said Luque in a voice that restored confidence to Almagro's sinking heart. "All is not yet lost. I will myself go to Pedrarias, and will find means to wring from him, not only his consent, but his assistance."

The next day Luque returned to Almagro with an exultant expression in his face.

"Victory!" he cried. "We have won! Pedrarias no longer refuses his aid. Now to buy ships, raise men, collect money, and be off once more for the southern seas!"

Pizarro, meanwhile, was still at Chuchama with the fifty men who had survived the first expedition. Almagro hastened to him with the good news. The faithful Luque lost no time in procuring sufficient funds. Two ships, larger and more stanch than those used before, were purchased and speedily stored; and Almagro succeeded in enlisting a force

of a hundred and ten stalwart Spaniards, one and all eager to try their fortunes in the new venture.

Just before the ships were ready to set sail, the three friends made a solemn contract among themselves. They agreed to divide equally all the lands that might be conquered, and all the treasures that might be acquired by the expedition. This contract was confirmed by an imposing religious ceremony, which was witnessed by a great concourse of people.

It was in the spring of 1526 that the two vessels, one commanded by Pizarro and the other by Almagro, set out upon their dangerous voyage. Every heart on board beat high with eager hope, and the spirits of all were cheered by the soft and favourable breezes that sped them rapidly southward. Pizarro was full of courage and confidence as the ships ploughed the waters of the Pacific, and more than ever believed that his perseverance would soon be crowned with great good fortune.

As there was no object to be gained by casting anchor at the several places which Pizarro had visited on his first expedition, they steered directly for the river of San Juan, the farthest point southward reached by Almagro.

Here Pizarro gave the order to put in. Landing his soldiers, he attacked a native hamlet which he espied on a neighbouring hill, and succeeded in seizing not only a number of golden trinkets, but several stalwart young savages. These he regarded as valuable captives; for he foresaw that they would be useful to him as guides and interpreters. They submitted to be taken on board ship, and stared about them when they had got there with an air of complete stupefaction.

Pizarro saw every evidence about him that the country on the borders of which he had landed both abounded with treasure and was thickly inhabited by a warlike race. With his little force of one hundred and sixty men, however, though they were trained and brave soldiers, and were supplied with

fire-arms, he could not venture to cope with the hordes of even undisciplined Indians of whom his scouts brought in such formidable stories.

He resolved, therefore, that Almagro should return in his ship to Panama for more soldiers, while he himself made his headquarters on the banks of the San Juan. At the same time he thought it prudent that his trusty pilot Ruiz should take the other ship, and reconnoitre the coast still farther southward.

Almagro and Ruiz accordingly put to sea again, soon parting and going their different ways.

Left alone in the strange land, surrounded by barbarians whose movements were anything but friendly, with a supply of provisions which would not last very long, Pizarro could not, nevertheless, wait idly for the return of his comrades. He made the most of his time by leading excursions into the interior, ascertaining as well as he could the character of the country and the numbers and degree of intelligence of the natives.

Many of these excursions proved dismal and dangerous. He was forced to penetrate through forests where it was almost as dark as night; he found himself often in dark ravines, and then in densely tangled marshes; and as he ascended now and then a precipitous hill, he beheld the towering crests of the Cordilleras forming an impassable barrier before him. As the soldiers trudged with difficulty over the rough crags or among the brambles, they would be stung by huge snakes, and would fall dying in intense agony in the path of their companions, while sometimes they were ferociously assailed by savage bands, and only escaped with the loss of several of their number.

Then their provisions gave out, and they were obliged to live on wild cocoa-nuts and bitter mangroves; and to add to their tortures, they were attacked by dense swarms of large musquitoes, which covered them with excruciating bites, and

compelled them, for want of a better protection, to bury themselves up to their chins in the sand.

No wonder that the courage even of the bravest sank, and that they loudly bewailed their miserable plight and their folly at leaving home to meet with such unparalleled suffering. But once more Pizarro betrayed the heroism of his nature. By his unfaltering spirits and patience, and his tact in dealing with his men, he soothed their anger and banished their despair, until the welcome sails of Ruiz's ship appeared in sight, and brought succour and new reason to hope for brilliant triumphs.

Ruiz made their hearts thrill with the story of his adventures southward of the San Juan. He had found countries better cultivated than any they had hitherto seen, and natives much more civilized than those by whom they were surrounded. He had seen Indian vessels, rude, to be sure, when compared with Spanish caravels, but so well built as to show that the inhabitants had some knowledge of the art of navigation. The people, too, whom he found in the boats wore woollen cloths of delicate texture worked in many colours, and they had balances with which to weigh gold, silver, and gems. He had contrived to approach and talk with these natives, and they had given him tempting pictures of the lands that lay between the ocean and the mountains, of the sides of the hills covered with sheep, of the towns adorned by stately temples and palaces, and of the broad roads that extended for many leagues across the country. That there might be no doubt of what he said, Ruiz had brought with him several Indians, who were very quick and intelligent, and by vivacious signs and gestures confirmed to Pizarro what his faithful pilot had narrated.

Pizarro's longing for the return of Almagro was soon satisfied ; for Ruiz had not been back many days before the other ship, coming from Panama, made its appearance, and was greeted with the liveliest demonstrations of joy.

Almagro had made a prosperous voyage to the isthmus, and brought back with him a force of eighty men, some of whom had just arrived from Spain eager for adventure and conquest. On arriving at Panama he had found Pedrarias gone, and a new governor, named Don Pedro de los Rios, in his place. Fortunately this new governor did not have Pedrarias's jealous and grasping disposition. He aided Almagro in recruiting his soldiers and re-provisioning his ship, and sent him away with cordial good wishes.

It was without regret that Pizarro and his comrades left the place where they had suffered so much, and with gay hearts they once more set sail. The ships took a southerly course, and it seemed probable that at last the brave Spaniards were on the point of achieving a really great success.

But misfortune seemed to pursue Pizarro at every step. If he escaped one peril he speedily encountered another. No sooner did he begin to rejoice at his triumph over one obstacle than a new difficulty presented itself.

Having survived the danger of famine and massacre, it was now the turn of the tempest to threaten him with destruction. The ships had only been at sea a few days when they were assailed by violent gales, and contrary winds made their progress slow and laboured. Then storms of terrific fury burst upon them in quick succession, making it absolutely necessary that they should seek the shelter of some port. Happily Ruiz had already explored that part of the ocean, and one day recognized an island where he had stayed several days. He assured Pizarro that it possessed a good harbour; whereupon the captain ordered the ships to run into it. At this island, which was named Gallo, they remained a fortnight; after which, the storms subsiding, they continued to sail until they reached a bay on the coast, which Pizarro called the Bay of St. Matthew, having arrived there on the day of that saint.

They did not stop long in this bay, but, keeping on their

way down the coast, were delighted to observe that the country bordering on the ocean gave constantly increasing evidences of cultivation and thrift.

One bright morning, as the ships were skimming over a rippling sea, Pizarro espied on the shore a large village, with better houses and a more civilized aspect than any he had before seen. There were regular streets, and the Indians whom he espied passing to and fro fairly glittered with golden ornaments. The natives on board told him that the name of the town was Tacamez, a famous place in those parts; and that the pretty, winding river that flowed just beyond abounded in large and beautiful emeralds.

Had Pizarro been familiar with the geography of the region he was traversing, he would have been rejoiced to know that he was now on the very borders of the Peruvian empire; but he was feeling his way, and was really ignorant that he was so near the goal of his ambition.

His first impulse was to land. Just as he had done so with a force of soldiers, a great multitude of natives, armed with javelins and bows and arrows, rushed down towards the shore, and gathered close together in hostile array. His situation was now extremely perilous. It seemed as if he and his men must speedily be annihilated. An amusing accident, however, saved them.

Among his soldiers were several who were on horseback. Now, the Indians had never seen a horse, and supposed the rider and his horse to be one animal. A soldier happened to fall off his steed; and this so amazed and frightened the savages, who thus saw the animal appear to divide in two pieces, that they retreated in all haste to the town.

But Pizarro was convinced that even now his force was not large enough to struggle with such formidable numbers of savages as, it was clear, inhabited the country. He therefore proposed to Almagro that he himself should return to Panama for reinforcements.

For the first time the friends angrily disagreed. Almagro declared that he would not remain while Pizarro went back ; and Pizarro hotly upbraided Almagro for always wishing to leave him behind, to suffer the miseries of those strange regions, while Almagro himself went to Panama. The dispute became so bitter that the two captains were on the point of striking each other, when Ruiz and the treasurer Ribera interposed and pacified them.

At last Pizarro yielded ; and it was decided that he should remain, and that Almagro should return for more men. The island of Gallo, which they had already visited, was selected as the refuge of Pizarro and his comrades ; and this decision was announced to the men.

A great clamour at once arose among them. Many were disheartened and discouraged by their past hardships, and declared that they would not again stay to become the prey of famine and of the poisoned arrows of the savages. They at last seemed to be pacified, however, and Almagro set sail.

It happened that several of the soldiers, finding that they could not openly escape, secretly wrote letters to their friends in Panama, describing their miseries, and concealed these letters in some bales of cotton which Almagro carried with him. When Almagro arrived at Panama, these letters were found by those to whom they were sent ; and one of them found its way into the hands of the governor. He was very much exasperated at its contents, which betrayed to him that the men had suffered dreadfully, and that as yet no very brilliant discoveries had been made.

The governor sternly rebuked Almagro for concealing from him the true state of things, and declared that not only should no more men be sent out, but that he would at once despatch some ships to bring back Pizarro and the men left with him on the island of Gallo.

This he did. Two vessels were sent out under the com-

mand of a Spaniard named Tafur, and meanwhile Almagro was detained at Panama.

When Tafur reached the island of Gallo, he found Pizarro and his comrades in a wretched plight. They had exhausted their provisions, and worn their clothes to rags; while perpetual storms had continually drenched them, there being no good shelter where they were.

The men were frantic with delight when they saw Tafur's ship. They revelled in the ample provisions he had brought; and when he announced that he had come to carry them all home again, they received the news with the wildest demonstrations of joy.

But Pizarro was determined not to go back. He was incensed at the governor's conduct, and was ready to risk his life in preventing the execution of his orders. Having come thus far, he resolutely refused to return to Panama, and thus confess his failure. Having caught a glimpse of a land abounding in riches, his heart was set on reaping the reward of his trials and courage.

Commanding his men to assemble on the shore, in a firm but quiet tone he thus addressed them:—

“Comrades, you have two paths between which to decide. One is full of perils and privations, exhausting toil, storms and famine, the poisoned arrow, the midnight attack of countless and ruthless savages; but it leads to Peru, with its untold wealth, the lasting glory and power of its conquest. The other road leads home, to Panama with its ease and indolence, and to contempt, poverty, and obscurity. Each one of you may choose which way to take. For my part, I remain.”

Pizarro then drew his sword, and, bending down, traced a deep, long line in the sand.

“Those of you,” he said, pointing to the line, “who decide to go back to Panama, stay where you are; but those of you who will stand by your captain, who are brave enough to

still share his dangers and his triumphs, follow me, and cross this line."

As he said this he stepped across the line, and, drawing himself up proudly, waited.

For a moment there was complete silence. The men glanced at each other, and at the immovable face of their commander. Some hung their heads, and slunk off to the rear. Others seemed to be hesitating. Then the faithful pilot Ruiz, glancing behind him as if to appeal to his comrades to follow him, strode over the line. After another moment of silence a second passed it, then a third, then a fourth. When all had crossed who made up their minds to stay with Pizarro, he found that he had thirteen gallant and devoted followers.

It was a small force with which to conquer an empire ; but Pizarro's stout soul never faltered at the prospect. He knew that, far away in Panama, his good friends Almagro and Luque were using all their energies to send him aid ; and, after all, to get rid of the faint-hearted and mutinous among his men was at least some gain.

Tafur sailed away, and Pizarro, with his thirteen comrades, remained on the island of Gallo. But he had already discovered that this island was not favourable for a long sojourn. Unhappily he had sent away his other ship soon after Almagro had sailed, so that he was now without any means of transportation whatever.

This difficulty was soon overcome. His men set lustily to work, and in a few hours had completed a strong raft. Upon this they placed their provisions, arms, and utensils ; and huddling together on the remaining space, they pushed out to sea.

They were upon the raft several days. Fortunately the weather was calm, and they were able to reach the island of Gorgona, seventy miles north of Gallo, without accident. Here Pizarro resolved to establish his little company as best

he could, and to wait patiently till assistance from Almagro should arrive.

At first their residence on this island was very pleasant. But ere long the tempests beat in their huts; the sun, when it was fair, blazed remorselessly down upon them; and they were tortured by the swarms of musquitoes and other insects that assailed them by day and night.

For seven months they endured miseries not less terrible than those they had before suffered. It seemed as if relief would never come. But Pizarro was now surrounded by stout and resolute fellows, who bore up as bravely as he himself against every mishap and anguish that afflicted them.

At last a small vessel came in sight. Pizarro rushed down to the shore, and waved to it to show where he was. The people on the vessel luckily saw him: the prow was turned towards the island; and the little band waded out into the sea, and clambered on board.

Pizarro found, as he had supposed, that the vessel had been sent out by Almagro; but he was greatly disappointed to discover that she had brought no soldiers. The governor of Panama, while he had allowed Almagro to send Pizarro provisions and ammunition, had sternly refused to permit any more men to embark.

The provisions, at least, were most welcome, and the adventurers partook of them with great gusto. It was something, moreover, to procure a fresh supply of powder and guns, and the little vessel was quite large enough to transport the little band wherever they wished to go.

Pizarro soon made up his mind what to do. Leaving two of his men, who were ill, in the care of some friendly Indians on the isle of Gorgona, he embarked with the remaining eleven, and took his way southward, even with so small a force, in the direction of the golden land which he was sure existed, and of which he was confident that, sooner or later, he would make the conquest.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE BORDERS OF PERU.

IT was a rash but heroic act for Pizarro to set out in a single little vessel and with only eleven men, and to venture into a country which it seemed probable was inhabited by millions of brave and warlike men.

But he could not bear the thought of going back to Panama until he could at least carry the certain news that a great and rich empire really existed in South America ; and both he and his men were not only willing but eager to risk their lives in exploring regions farther southward than they had yet gone.

The little ship kept steadily on, past the island of Gallo, the point of Tacamez, and another point which Pizarro named St. Helena ; and after a voyage of three weeks, the adventurers entered one afternoon one of the most beautiful bays they had ever seen. The Indians whom Pizarro had brought with him as interpreters told him that it was the Gulf of Guayaquil, and, pointing across the water to a verdant and fertile shore, exclaimed that there was the kingdom of Quito, the most northerly part of the Peruvian Inca's dominions.

Pizarro stood still on his deck, and gazed long and silently upon the borders of the land he had suffered so much to reach, and he longed so ardently to conquer. Visions of fabulous wealth, of vast power and glory, dizzied his brain, and he thought bitterly of his ill-fortune in not having a

force large enough on the spot with which to attempt the contemplated conquest.

Anchoring off the island of Santa Clara, Pizarro narrowly questioned his Indians about the locality of the region in which he had arrived. They told him that just opposite the island, on the shore of the mainland, there stood a large town named Tumbes; while on the other side was another island called Puna, the inhabitants of which were hostile to the people on the coast.

The next morning Pizarro resolved to venture nearer Tumbes, and if possible to land, and enter the town, not as an enemy, but in a friendly manner. The sails of the little ship were therefore hoisted, and it was not long before the adventurers found themselves opposite the town.

The sight which now met Pizarro's gaze filled him with astonishment and admiration. Tumbes was indeed an imposing place, with a strong fortress perched on a craggy eminence, aqueducts, temples, palaces, convents, many houses built of stone, and wide, well-paved, and graded streets. The people, who flocked in great numbers along the shore, dressed in gay colours, and, as Pizarro observed even at his distance, glittering with rings, bracelets, and chains of gold and gems, were of a higher type than any he had yet seen, and manifested their wonder at beholding a European ship, so utterly unlike anything they had before known, by running to and fro, shouting loudly, and throwing up their swarthy hands and arms.

At this moment a large flat-boat, full of Indian soldiers, pushed out from the shore. Their purpose was not, however, to attack Pizarro; but they were setting out on an expedition against Puna.

Pizarro saw his opportunity, and beckoning to the Indians in the boat, asked several of the chiefs to come on board his ship. This they did after some hesitation. Through his own Indians acting as interpreters, he told them that he was no

foe to the natives, but had come on a friendly errand ; and at last he persuaded them to postpone their expedition, go back to the town, send him some provisions, and tell the governor that he wished to despatch one of his men ashore.

The governor, sharing in the wonder of the people, and convinced of Pizarro's good faith, at once sent a boat-load of bananas, corn, sweet potatoes, pine-apples, cocoa-nuts, game, and fish to the strangers, with a message, which he sent by a Peruvian noble of high rank, consenting that a Spaniard should land, as Pizarro had asked.

This noble, who was very richly attired, and was a tall and handsome man, with great dignity of bearing, betrayed a lively curiosity to examine every part of the wonderful ship. This Pizarro cheerfully gratified, regaling him afterwards with a bountiful dinner, and presenting him with an iron hatchet.

The next morning Pizarro ordered one of his men, named Molina, ashore, with some pork and chickens for the governor, and with instructions to observe everything with the most minute attention. With Molina went a negro who had joined Pizarro from Panama. No sooner had Molina stepped on land than he was surrounded by a crowd of chattering and excited natives. The women gathered about him, and stared in amazement at his long brown beard and his fair skin ; while others, never having seen a black man, went up to the negro, and tried to rub off his sooty complexion, which they thought artificial, with their fingers. The negro grinned at this, and showed his white teeth ; which made the Indians shout with laughter.

Just at this moment one of the cocks which Molina had brought for the governor stretched out his neck, and crowed with all his might. The natives, who had never seen such a fowl, flocked around him, and asked Molina "what the little fellow was saying."

The Spaniard visited the governor, whom he found in a

handsome house, attended by a guard, and served upon dishes of gold and silver ; and was then conducted about the town, in which he saw and noted on every hand the evidence of wealth, thrift, and artistic taste.

When Pizarro heard Molina's report, he resolved to send another of his comrades to observe and confirm what the first had witnessed. Among his little band was a noble-looking Greek cavalier, named Candia, who had followed Pizarro's fortunes through every vicissitude. Candia was now chosen to go on shore ; and buckling on a shining suit of armour, and carrying a gun on his shoulder, he marched boldly and alone up the principal street of Tumbez, followed by a vast multitude of Indians.

They were especially curious about his gun, which they begged him to "make speak." So he set up a board and fired at it. The sharp and sudden noise, the smoke, and the board split in pieces and flying in every direction, stunned and frightened the Indians. Some fell on their knees and hid their faces in their hands, others shrieked, and many scampered away as fast as their legs could carry them.

Candia returned to the ship with an account as strange as that of Molina. He had seen, among other things, a temple, the walls of which were almost covered with golden panels ; and flowers of gold and silver set out in beautiful gardens.

His wildest dreams about the riches of Peru being amply confirmed, Pizarro reluctantly took leave of Tumbez, sailed out of the lovely bay, and continued his voyage to the south. He landed on the coast at several points, and found everywhere the same proofs of wealth and skill that had so dazzled him at Tumbez. The natives received him with friendly welcome, mingled with wonder. He had no difficulty in procuring from them ample provisions, as well as a goodly quantity of golden trinkets and jewels ; and, excepting that he encountered one or two storms, his voyage was prosperously pursued.

On reaching the port of Santa, where a broad and winding river flowed into the sea, Pizarro resolved at last to turn his prow northward, and to sail leisurely back towards Panama. He had done all that, with his very small force, he could hope to do. It remained to return home, to tell the marvellous tale of his discoveries, and to fit out a new and larger expedition with which to begin and complete the conquest of Peru.

He did not, however, hasten his arrival at Panama. As he sailed along the coast he now and then cast anchor and went ashore. At one place he was splendidly entertained by an Inca princess, who regaled him with a native banquet comprising mutton, game, the luscious fruits, and rich, succulent vegetables of the tropical clime; and afterwards amused him with music and dancing. It was here that Pizarro raised the royal standard of Spain, and took possession of the country in the name of the king.

Continuing his voyage, he once more anchored near Tumbez, where he met with a more cordial reception than ever. So attractive a town was it, and so friendly were the natives, that two or three of his men, among them Molina, begged permission to be left there until Pizarro should return—a permission which the captain readily granted. At the same time Pizarro persuaded two intelligent young Indians to go with him to Panama, foreseeing that in any future expedition they could not fail to be of great use to him.

The rest of the voyage was prosperous and uneventful. One day Pizarro sailed into Panama harbour, and fired guns to notify the people of his arrival. The quays were soon crowded, and among the first to greet him as he stepped on shore were his faithful friends Almagro and Luque.

He told them of all he had seen, and made their eyes glisten at the rare cloths, the dazzling gems, and the Peruvian sheep, or llamas, which he had brought to prove the truth of his tale. But they could not in return give him any pleasant news. The governor, they said, was opposed to any more

expeditions, and refused to believe in the existence of a golden land. He would surely refuse his aid to their further projects, and without his aid and consent it would be hopeless to undertake a fresh enterprise.

Pizarro was deeply chagrined to hear this. What could they do? All three were as firmly resolved as ever to make the conquest of Peru; but their money was almost exhausted, and with the governor's hostility they could not hope to enlist a man. It was probable, even if they had had money and men, that De los Rios would forbid their sailing out of port.

After many long and earnest discussions, the three enthusiastic friends made up their minds that there was but one course left to them. This was to appeal to a higher power than the governor, and that was his master, the King of Spain.

Ferdinand and Isabella were now dead, and their famous and warlike son, Charles the Fifth, who was not only King of Spain, but had also been elected Emperor of Germany, wore the diadem of Aragon and Castile. A monarch so ambitious and so enlightened would surely listen eagerly to the thrilling story of Peruvian wealth; and he would not fail to lend them an aid far more powerful than that of the governor of Panama.

Pizarro was chosen with one voice to go to Spain, and to seek the presence of the emperor. A ship was soon procured. Pizarro put on board three or four llamas, a variety of Peruvian cloths, and a large number of golden trinkets, taking with him, besides, several of the Indians whom he had brought from the South American coast; and in the early spring of 1528 he set sail for his native land, which he had not seen for many a long and eventful year.

CHAPTER VIII.

PIZARRO IN SPAIN.

PIZARRO must have felt strangely on the day when, six or seven weeks after his departure from Panama, his eyes at length rested again upon the glittering spires and domes of Seville. It was from that beautiful city that, more than a quarter of a century before, he had set out, a penniless and homeless youth, to seek his fortunes in an unknown land.

What strange things had happened since! How often had he been in near peril of death! What wonderful peoples and countries he had seen! And now that his feet were once more to tread his native soil, how different was his return from his departure!

His fame had already reached the land of his birth. No longer obscure, unknown, a ragged wanderer on the face of the earth, his deeds of valiant daring, his discoveries of brilliant promise, had been repeated from mouth to mouth, and he found Spain proud of his achievements. But just as he landed an event happened which seemed at first likely to put an end to his schemes. A man named Enciso, who had played a somewhat conspicuous part in the settlement of the New World, and who claimed that a debt was due him from the colony on the isthmus, caused Pizarro to be seized and thrown into prison.

This was a dismal beginning of his mission; but as soon as the emperor heard of the outrage, he sent an order in all

haste that Pizarro should be released. At the same time the emperor invited Pizarro to come to him at Toledo, where he then was.

Charles the Fifth was sitting in the great hall of one of his many palaces, surrounded by his knights and nobles, and by a brilliant array of courtiers of both sexes. Among them was a tall and well-built cavalier, whose swarthy face was darker even than those around him, as if it had been bronzed by much exposure and toughened by rude experience. This was no less a person than Hernando Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico, and nearly related to Pizarro by ties of kinship.

As Pizarro advanced to the throne, he could but observe how little like a mighty monarch the emperor looked. He was a short, stubby man, with light yellow hair, which was cut short, and bristled from his forehead. His beard and moustache, carefully trimmed, were of the same homely colour; but his bright, clear blue eyes, and the large, firm jaw of the family of Castile, were features that betokened the real resolution and energy of his character.

He received Pizarro with a smile of gracious welcome, and bade him sit and tell the stirring tale of his wanderings. This he did, relating his thrilling adventures in a plain, straightforward, soldierly fashion, that quite won the hearts of the emperor and his courtiers. He spoke earnestly, and with a simple and warm enthusiasm that enlisted all hearts in sympathy with him, and as he went on Charles leaned forward and eagerly drank in every word.

Then Pizarro ordered the attendants to bring in the Peruvian sheep and the chests of golden ornaments, jewels, and many-coloured cloths. These called forth a cry of admiration from the emperor, who, rising to his feet, said,—

“Pizarro, you are a brave and gallant man, and a good subject. You have done wonderful things. You have opened a way to a vast and precious addition to my dominions and power, and to you shall be committed the completion

of the gigantic task you have undertaken. I declare that you shall go forward and conquer Peru, and in that distant and golden land shall raise my imperial standard. You shall have not only my permission, but my God-speed and my cordial assistance."

Charles the Fifth was as good as his word. A paper, called the "Capitulation," was drawn up, and signed by the emperor, which described the grants and powers he conferred on Pizarro in Peru. He was permitted to occupy and rule that country as its governor-general, with an enormous salary and almost royal authority. Almagro was made commander of Tumbez, and Luque bishop of the same place; while the faithful pilot Ruiz was granted the title of "Grand Pilot of the Southern Ocean." It was, besides, agreed that Pizarro should enlist two hundred and fifty soldiers, and that he should set out for Peru within the period of six months after reaching Panama.

His errand to the emperor having thus been crowned with the most brilliant success, the adventurer's thoughts now reverted to his early home in Estremadura. He had known, to be sure, but few joys in that home; yet there was in his heart, in spite of all, that instinct of love of and yearning for one's birthplace which rarely dies wholly out in the human breast.

He resolved, therefore, to spend part of the time, while he was waiting for his expedition to be got ready, in visiting Truxillo, and observing the old familiar places of his childhood. He would return to his native place a cavalier of renown, the welcomed guest of the emperor, and the destined ruler of a great realm in the New World.

On arriving at Truxillo, he found that many changes had taken place, but these were rather in the persons he had known than in the town itself. The haughty old soldier, his father, was no more, and his humble peasant-mother had also passed away without witnessing his triumphs. But four

stalwart brothers were there still, and were proud to welcome their famous kinsman with such scant hospitality as they could afford. They were all poor, but were at least better off than when, in their childhood's days, they had been the slaves of swineherds.

When they heard Pizarro's story of the wonders of the New World, they one and all became eager to share his good fortune. Ambition and pride ran in their blood, and they became inspired with a longing to reap the golden fruits of conquest. Pizarro was willing that his brothers should seize the opportunity which the proposed expedition would afford them, and all four of them accompanied him back to Seville.

To Pizarro's chagrin, he found that, on reaching Seville, the required number of men had not enlisted. But he made up his mind to wait no longer; and ordering such soldiers as had assembled to embark on three ships that had been procured, he prepared to set out across the Atlantic.

At this moment he learned from his friend and kinsman Cortez that the Council of the Indies, finding that he had not the full force he had agreed to raise, were about to put a stop to his sailing. With all haste he weighed anchor, and pushed out to sea in one of the ships. At the same time he told his elder brother Hernando to join him with the other two ships, as soon as he could, at the Canary Islands.

The council, on hearing that Pizarro had escaped them, at first threatened to retain Hernando and his vessels; but fearing the anger of the emperor, they at last permitted him to depart and rejoin his brother.

Pizarro's voyage, therefore, across the ocean was made easily and without accident, and he arrived safely at the isthmus with his ships and armament. He landed at Nombre de Dios, on the side of the isthmus opposite to Panama. On going on shore, he was surprised to find his two friends Almagro and Luque waiting to receive him. They had

crossed the isthmus in order to hear at the earliest moment the result of his mission to the emperor.

As soon as they were alone together, Pizarro told his friends how graciously the emperor had received him ; how Charles had promised his aid ; and finally, with what zeal the great conqueror Cortez had come to his assistance. Then taking a long roll from his pocket, he informed them that that was the "capitulation" which the emperor had granted them ; and proceeded to read it.

As he went on, an expression of surprise, disappointment, and anger spread over the face of Almagro ; and when Pizarro came to the clauses which declared that Almagro should only be governor of Tumbez, while he himself was made the ruler of all Peru, Almagro broke out in an indignant speech.

"Is this the way, Pizarro," he exclaimed fiercely, "that you treat your devoted friends? Are you base enough to take thus the lion's share for yourself, and leave to me, who have suffered and sacrificed as well as you, only the command of a single paltry fortress? I tell you I will not submit to it. We are all equals in this matter, and for you to grasp all the power and glory is more than I will bear."

"Be patient, Almagro, and listen," replied Pizarro calmly. "I admit that it seems unjust ; but I declare to you that I did all I possibly could to persuade the emperor to divide the fruits of the expedition between us. It was in vain, however, that I pleaded. The emperor insisted that the power must rest in the hands of a single man, and he compelled me to assume it. But do not doubt my friendship, comrade. Trust me, and all will go well. Peru is big enough to satisfy the ambition of us both ; and its conquest once made, I pledge you that you shall share equally with me all the power and riches I acquire."

But Almagro would not be appeased ; and when they re-

returned to Panama, he declared that he would have nothing more to do with Pizarro, but would fit out an expedition for Peru on his own account.

The good priest Luque saw that this quarrel would ruin the project which all had so much at heart, and earnestly set about healing the breach between Pizarro and Almagro.

In this he at last succeeded. Pizarro agreed that if the expedition accomplished its object, Almagro should share his power, and that he would not promote his brothers at Almagro's expense.

Every preparation for Pizarro's departure for Peru was now hastened as rapidly as possible. He had been compelled to leave the ships in which he had brought his force from Spain on the other side of the isthmus; it was therefore necessary that new ships should be purchased and fitted out. Some of the men he had brought with him, too, became discouraged by the dismal reports which they heard about South America, and deserted; and Pizarro and Almagro had to busy themselves with making good this loss.

At last three small vessels were procured, and a company of one hundred and eighty men was raised. Some of these men had gone with Pizarro on his previous expeditions. Besides the soldiers, he proposed to carry thirty horses, in order to provide the means for cavalry operations. At the same time, arms, ammunition, and supplies were procured in what seemed to be an ample quantity.

It was about midwinter, in the year 1531, that the new expedition was fully organized and ready to set out, in pursuance of a new attempt to make the conquest of Peru. With the emperor's approval in his pocket, with a force of stalwart soldiers, with stanch ships to bear him and his companions to the promised land of gold, with a knowledge of the regions he was about to invade, and with a soul that knew no faltering, Pizarro found himself prepared to risk and suffer all to obtain the victory which had been the dream of years.

CHAPTER IX.

THE THIRD EXPEDITION.

IT was on a cool, crisp day in January 1531 that a long and brilliant procession, winding its way through the irregular streets of the little city of Panama, entered the square in front of the cathedral. Once more that sacred edifice, the most imposing that Panama could as yet boast, was filled with its motley population ; and once more a royal governor, no longer the jealous Pedrarias, but now the more generous De los Rios, stood by the high altar, surrounded by a gay concourse of cavaliers.

Near him, again, might be seen the tall figure of Pizarro and the short form of Almagro ; while just behind these stood Pizarro's four brothers—Hernando, Juan, Gonzalo, and Francisco of Alcantara. At the high altar the worthy Luque, as before, officiated ; and in the space just in front were ranged the files of doughty soldiers who were about to follow Pizarro to Peru. Above them were held the banners and the royal standard of Spain, the coats of arms skilfully worked in many bright colours, and in gold and silver thread.

Presently the solemn ceremonies began. The priest, turning towards the soldiers, raised his arms aloft. The soldiers kneeled, all except the standard-bearers, who advanced with lowered banners to the foot of the altar. Luque touched the banners with his fingers, and blessed them : the bearers then

stepped back to their places, and knelt beside their comrades.

This rite was followed by the chanting of the mass ; after which Luque administered the sacrament—first to Pizarro and his brothers, then to the soldiers, one after another. Next came the benediction, which the priest delivered in a loud and fervent voice. Scarcely had he ceased speaking when the drums beat and the trumpets sounded ; the procession re-formed, with the governor and the cavaliers at its head ; the populace flocked eagerly at its heels ; and, with flying banners and soul-stirring music, it took its course towards the quays.

The three vessels, with streamers floating gaily at the mast-heads, were moored just by the wharf ; and, promptly on reaching them, the men, after embracing their families and friends, began to embark.

Pizarro lingered behind the rest to bid adieu to the governor and his partners Almagro and Luque, who took leave of him with ardent wishes for his success. Then, alone, he passed on board the flag-ship, and, standing on the deck, waved a cheery farewell to the assembled multitude.

Soon the sails were spread, and the ships, side by side, sailed slowly into the lovely bay. Cannon boomed their noisy God-speed from the shore, and a great shout went up from the excited throng. Soon, however, the town was lost to view as the vessels rounded a point ; and Pizarro once more found himself on the open sea, speeding towards the golden land.

Among those who were most impatient to reach the scene of action were Pizarro's brothers, all of whom were inspired with his own bold and intrepid spirit, and who longed to display their skill and valour in the conflicts that were to ensue.

The voyage began with happy auguries. Though the winds were sometimes contrary, no furious tempest burst over their heads, checking their progress or endangering their lives.

The ships, thanks to the experience of the captains in these waters and to a better knowledge of navigation, made far greater speed than when Pizarro made his first expedition ; and a distance which had formerly taken him months to traverse was now accomplished in a fortnight.

Pizarro wished to make his first landing at Tumbez, the wealth and beauty of which had so much impressed him, and where he had left Molina and his companions. But he was forced to put in some leagues farther north—at the Bay of St. Matthew. Here were a good harbour and an easy landing-place ; and anchoring his little fleet just off the shore, he disembarked his men and established a camp.

With the force he now commanded, he felt sure that he could defend himself from any number of natives who were likely to attack him in this part of the country ; and he resolved to send all three of the ships back to Panama for reinforcements, while he marched his little army southward towards Tumbez.

The time had come when Pizarro was bent upon a desperate and determined attempt to make the conquest of Peru. He had a brave army, though a small one, that was heart and soul devoted to him ; and he knew that he could not long conceal his purpose from those whom he intended to attack. He therefore made up his mind that he would no longer, except when absolutely necessary, attempt to win the confidence of the natives by pretensions of friendship, but would boldly assail them, and capture their treasures and country as fast as he could.

Having sent his ships forward to meet him farther south, Pizarro broke up his camp at the Bay of St. Matthew, and gave the order to march. Addressing his men in a resolute tone, he said,—

“Comrades, we are about to go through a difficult country, where there are few good roads or bridges, and which is full of hostile Indians. But be of good courage ; fame and for-

tune await you at the end. Never doubt that the victory will be ours. Bear every trial bravely, and keep up stout hearts, and your triumph will be certain."

As if to set his men a good example, and animate them with his own confidence and hopefulness, he marched at their head, and himself guided them through the swamps and thickets, and across the yawning chasms. When they came to a roaring torrent, which they often did, they saw their leader plunge boldly into the water, waving them to follow, and swim across the rapid current; and when, wearied with the perpetual marching over uneven ground and through entangled brush that tripped them up at every step, they saw his sturdy form still pushing vigorously forward, they were ashamed to show themselves weaker than he, and braced up anew their bodies and spirits.

It was not very long before the Spaniards had a foretaste of the good things which awaited them in Peru. On turning a hill, they came suddenly in sight of a closely built Indian village, nestling between the hill and a winding river. This village was called Coaque.

Pizarro made up his mind to attack Coaque at once, and, by surprising the inhabitants, to render them powerless to resist his assault. He therefore ordered his men to rush forward and fire their guns, and to capture the huts.

The natives, hearing the noise and shouts, ran out in dismay; and, on seeing the body of strange men rapidly advancing, made all haste to escape into the woods.

The Spaniards, on entering the huts, were delighted to find not only an abundance of food, but many articles made of gold and silver, besides cloths of fine texture. As they were eagerly searching the rooms, one of the soldiers uttered a loud cry, and held up a large green stone that glittered in his hand.

"It is an emerald!" cried a keen-eyed monk named Reginaldo, who had gone with Pizarro to convert the natives

—"that is, it looks like one. But it can be easily tested. Pound it with a hammer. If it breaks, it is no true jewel ; but if it resists the stroke, it is precious indeed."

The soldier did as he was bidden, and the stone crumbled under the hammer. Several similar stones found in the huts were subjected to the same test, and all of them broke ; and the ignorant soldiers thus destroyed a number of jewels which at home would have brought enormous prices. The monk knew better than to advise them as he did, for he carefully kept all the emeralds he could lay his hands on, and secreted them about his person.

The ships rejoined Pizarro at Coaque. He put on board a considerable portion of the treasures he had seized in the village ; and having divided the rest equally among the men, he sent the ships home with a glowing account of the prospects of the expedition.

It was on leaving Coaque, and marching southward towards Tumbez, that the Spaniards began to suffer some of the serious hardships of their expedition. They were forced to trudge over sandy roads under a blazing sun, and their heavy armour and thick clothing added greatly to their discomfort. They grew ill with horrid ulcers, which proved in some cases fatal, and which caused great suffering to nearly every man in the company. They found but few villages, and those few were poverty-stricken. Their eyes, moreover, were greeted by neither food nor treasure.

Pizarro kept his line of march close to the coast. He knew that it was possible that reinforcements or supplies might come for him from Panama any day, and he was anxious not to miss them when they came.

One day, sure enough, he espied a ship bearing down from the north. He ordered his standard-bearers to run along the shore and wave their banners. These were soon perceived by the ship, which swung in towards the shore, and anchored. She proved to be laden with food, and to have brought

several officers sent out by the emperor to accompany Pizarro on his expedition.

Nor was this the only instance of good fortune which happened to the intrepid chief ; for, on arriving a few days after at a little harbour called Puerto Vieja, he was there rejoined by another ship, bringing a reinforcement of thirty men to his little army. These men were commanded by a brave and veteran cavalier named Belalcazar.

But Pizarro had now to contend with another difficulty. Puerto Vieja, unlike the country through which the Spaniards had been passing, was a beautiful spot. Tropical trees, affording abundant shade, grew in profusion almost to the water's edge.

In such a spot some of the Spanish soldiers felt that they might happily establish themselves, and settle down ; and these begged Pizarro to proceed no farther, but to avail himself of the locality—to remain there, and form a colony.

But Pizarro had no other thought, no less an ambition, than that of conquering Peru. His was not the gentle temper that could be content to rest in peace and plenty on the borders of the promised land. As he himself was discouraged by no obstacle, terrified by no danger, he scouted the idea that the expedition should end so tamely ; and he appealed to his men with all his simple and rugged eloquence to follow him on to the glorious goal which he foresaw awaited them.

There was not a soldier in all his little army that was not devotedly attached to him ; he had quite won their hearts by sharing their every toil and peril, and one and all promptly gave up their scheme, and with a single voice called out for him to lead on and they would follow.

A rapid march soon brought the adventurers to the shores of the Bay of Guayaquil. Pizarro now recognized every landmark. Here, in the bay, was the island of Santa Clara, where he had anchored. Nearer still, the long wooded island

of Puna, with its Indian villages, appeared to the view. In the dim distance, on the opposite shore, could just be descried the dome of the Temple of the Sun, which rose above the other buildings of Tumbez.

Once more the bold cavalier found himself at the very frontier of Peru. This time, at least, he had men enough to attempt a determined attack, and Tumbez was the first object at which to aim it.

Pizarro had no sooner arrived on the shore opposite Puna than a number of boats came off, and some Indians landed. It soon appeared that at their head was the chief, or, as they called him, the "cacique" of the island, and that his errand was to invite Pizarro and his company to take up their abode upon it. Pizarro communicated with the cacique through the Indians he had taken to Panama, and had brought back with him to act as interpreters.

After heartily thanking the cacique for his hospitality, Pizarro said,—

"I gladly accept your invitation; but how can so large a number of men, with their arms and baggage, be carried to the island?"

"Easily," replied the cacique. "I will cause some balsas to be built, and upon them a large number of men can cross at once."

"And what are balsas?"

"We will soon show you."

Under the cacique's orders, several Indians began to cut some long light poles. These they fastened together firmly, crosswise like a raft, and when this had been done they fixed some boards on top. The shape of these balsas when finished was like a hand stretched out flat. A sail was hoisted in the centre, and then the cacique invited the Spaniards to embark.

Four balsas proved sufficient to carry over the men, horses, and baggage, for two of them held fifty men each. Mean-

while Pizarro crossed in a small boat with the cacique and several other leading Indians.

They soon reached the verdant and picturesque shore of Puna, where a great crowd of natives, decked out with cloaks of brilliant colours and gold ornaments, had gathered to welcome them.

Along the road that led from the shore to the centre of the island a profusion of fruits and vegetables had been collected with which to regale the strangers ; and, as may well be believed, they fell to with a lusty appetite.

Their hunger appeased, the cacique led them to a hillock, with an opening in the forest which extended down the side to the shore, and here he begged Pizarro to make his quarters.

This cordial reception from the natives of Puna pleased Pizarro very much. He thought it would be a good thing to have them as his allies, since he was now resolved to attack Tumbez, and knew that the Puna men were the bitter enemies of that town.

For some time the Spaniards remained peaceably on the island, living on the fat of the land, and obeyed as superiors by the Indians. But one day a faithful Indian, one of the interpreters Pizarro had brought with him, went to the captain's tent, and said in a mysterious tone,—

“Be warned in time, master. These people pretend to be your friends ; but they are plotting some perfidy against you. The cacique comes to you with bows and smiles and sweet words ; but he is secretly assembling his warriors and drilling them in the woods, and they are busy in the villages making arrows and javelins.”

Pizarro, aroused to the danger, sent some men out to watch the Indians, and observe what they could in the villages. They soon returned to confirm the interpreter's suspicions. There were indeed warriors concealed in the woods and houses, and arms were being busily made. It appeared that

the Indians intended to attack the Spanish camp on the following night.

Not a moment was to be lost. Pizarro at once sent a small force into the village where the cacique and other chiefs lived. The Spaniards surrounded the cacique's house, and, having easily overcome his guard, seized him, bound him hand and foot, and sent him to the camp. Then they ransacked the house, and several others near by, and found many golden ornaments, jewels, and fine cloths. The natives fled in dismay into the forest.

Content with their success, the Spaniards returned with their booty to the camp.

But Pizarro knew that the whole population of the island would now be fired with anger against him, and would speedily seek their revenge. He posted a circle of sentinels all around his camp, and they kept careful watch throughout the night.

This was, as it proved, a wise precaution. Sure enough, just before dawn, a wild roar of voices was heard at the edge of the wood, mingled with the deafening sound of warlike instruments, and presently a swarm of savages issued from behind the trees. They advanced upon several sides, and a shower of arrows and darts fell upon the Spaniards.

Pizarro leaped forward, and commanded his men to respond with a volley of powder and shot. A short and sharp encounter ensued, and several Spaniards, among them Pizarro's brother Hernando, fell to the ground, crying out and writhing in their pain. But though there were only a hundred and fifty Spaniards and many thousands of Indians, the battle soon ended in a complete victory for Pizarro.

The Indians turned and ran, and were instantly followed up by Pizarro's little body of cavalry, who pursued them for some distance, striking them down two and three at a time as they fled.

Pizarro did not neglect to make the most of his triumph. He sent his troops all over the island, attacking and plunder-

ing the villages, seizing provisions, and, wherever they were resisted, dealing deadly havoc among the natives. Many of the natives fled to their boats, and, leaving all they possessed behind them, fled to the mainland. Those who submitted to the Spaniards, however, were spared, though Pizarro ordered their movements to be narrowly watched.

It remained to deal with the cacique and other chiefs who had been taken prisoners. The latter charged that the treachery to the Spaniards was the work of the cacique ; but he, on the other hand, declared that it was they who had instigated him to attack Pizarro, and that he was forced to enter into the plot against his will.

Pizarro came to the conclusion, after sharply questioning them, that the cacique's story was the true one. Sparing him, therefore, the captain sternly commanded the other chiefs to be beheaded. It was a cruel and barbarous act ; but Pizarro, in doing as he did, followed the rough custom of his time, and resolutely took the harsh measures which seemed necessary to achieve his purposes.

He then set the cacique at liberty, and made him solemnly promise to be his ally, and to gather his scattered subjects together again.

It was full time to resume his progress towards Peru ; and the first task was to subdue Tumbez, the domes and buildings of which he could dimly descry on the shore from his camp at Puna.

Getting together such boats as he could find, and bringing the four balsas, or rafts, once more into service, he embarked his little army, horses, and supplies, one bright spring day, and set out for the mainland. The balsas went on ahead with the plunder captured at Puna, while the boats followed with the main force ; and in a few hours Pizarro found himself again off the harbour of Tumbez, and on the very borders of the dominions of the Inca of Peru.

CHAPTER X.

PIZARRO INVADES PERU.

ON coming near the shore, Pizarro's surprise was great to see nothing of his rafts, which had gone on ahead with his baggage and military stores, and still greater when the streets of Tumbez, instead of being alive, as on his first visit, with a throng of curious and friendly natives, appeared to be completely deserted.

Here and there an Indian was seen hurrying along the shore or through the streets : otherwise the town was solitary and silent. Pizarro at once conjectured that the people of Tumbez, learning his approach with a larger force than before, had become alarmed, and fled. But what had become of his rafts and the men who had gone upon them ?

Landing as soon as he could, and ordering his soldiers to disembark, he sent out reconnoitring parties to search for the Indians, and find out the cause of this sudden disappearance.

Pretty soon several natives, who had been caught running away by one of the parties, were brought to Pizarro, who caused them to be questioned by his interpreters.

From them he learned that his rafts had been seized and broken up, the goods carried off, and the men on them hurried into the woods and there killed.

Meanwhile other scouts came in to tell Pizarro that Tumbez was not only deserted by its inhabitants, but that most

of its buildings had been destroyed, and the treasures taken away out of reach.

Among the parties sent out to reconnoitre was one commanded by Hernando Pizarro, comprising forty cavalry and eighty foot-soldiers. Pizarro caused a large raft to be constructed, upon which Hernando and his force crossed a broad and winding river which flowed just south of Tumbez. After scouring the country for some time, Hernando came in sight of an Indian encampment.

He attacked this encampment without delay, and easily routed the Indians, and after pursuing them for some distance, he sent a messenger to their chief to ask him to make peace.

"I am afraid of the Spaniards," was the chief's reply; "and I dare not trust myself with them, unless they promise that I shall not be killed."

Hernando at once responded, "You will not be injured, but may go with me to our captain without fear; and he will pardon you for your offences against him."

The chief and some of his chief men then timidly approached Hernando's camp, whence they were conducted back to Pizarro. When Pizarro saw the chief, who proved to be the governor or "cacique" of Tumbez, a dark frown settled on his face.

"Why have you, whom I treated so well when I was here before, massacred the brave comrades whom I left under your protection?" he angrily asked. "And what have you done with the men who came on the raft?"

The chief trembled with fear; his teeth chattered and his knees knocked together. He feared lest Pizarro was about to order him to be shot.

"I beg you, great stranger, listen to me, and spare me," he faltered. "It was not I, but some of my principal men, who dealt foully with the Spaniards."

Pizarro commanded the principal men who had been captured to be brought face to face with the cacique. When

they arrived he said, "Point out those who committed this atrocious deed."

The chief glanced from one to the other, and then, falling at Pizarro's feet, begged him not to take his life, adding, "I swear to you, mighty lord, that I do not see the men here who did it."

Pizarro looked at him scornfully, and ordered him and the other Indians to be kept close prisoners. He reflected that the cacique might, after all, be of more use to him alive than dead, and resolved to spare him, but to take care that he had no chance to betray him.

The Spanish commander had taken up his residence in two large and quite comfortable houses, which were surrounded by two high walls, and had open courts and doors just like European dwellings. But he did not remain long at Tumbez. There was no treasure to obtain, and the provisions he had brought were becoming exhausted.

Assembling his men one day, Pizarro told them that they were now in the dominions of the great Inca of Peru.

"There are great dangers and difficulties yet before us," he said; "but they are of a different sort from those which have hitherto impeded us. We are approaching the mountains, which we shall have to cross, and beyond them we shall at last come face to face with the might of the Peruvian monarch. We are few, and his soldiers are many and brave; but we have fire-arms, discipline, and glorious hopes. The stirring action of war is before us; let us hasten on to meet it!"

"Long live the captain! Lead us forward, and we will follow," shouted his men in reply, waving their hands.

Leaving the cacique, whom he had now bound to him in friendship by his leniency, to gather his people together again at Tumbez, and also a detachment of Spaniards to guard the place, Pizarro set out at the head of his men, keeping his march near the sea-coast.

Not long before, he had been joined by the famous Hernando de Soto, who was destined afterwards to discover the Mississippi river. De Soto had brought with him a hundred cavaliers and some horses, which were a most welcome reinforcement to Pizarro's little army, while De Soto's own intrepid valour and indomitable spirit were worth more to him than many men.

As the Spaniards marched along, they abstained from offering any violence to the natives in the villages by which they passed. This was a wise stroke of policy on the part of Pizarro: for he had cut himself off from all communication with Panama; and if he were defeated in his conflict with the Inca, he would need the friendship of the Indians in his rear to secure a safe retreat northward.

Besides, by treating them kindly, he was able to procure provisions easily from them, and good quarters at his halting-places. A long but not very difficult tramp brought the brave little army to a beautifully green and fertile valley, through which a river ran to the sea a few leagues beyond. Struck by the loveliness of the spot, and its excellent situation for defence, Pizarro resolved to found a colony there. He sent back to Tumbez, and ordered the ships in which De Soto had come to sail around to the bay at the mouth of the river; and soon his men were busily at work cutting timber and gathering heavy blocks of stone, which were speedily transformed into handsome buildings—among them a church, some storehouses, and fortifications.

Pizarro formed a government for the colony, and divided up the fertile pastures and meadows round about among the settlers whom he appointed to remain there; and after naming the town "St. Michael," after the saint upon whose day it was established, he again gave the order to push forward. The Spaniards crossed the river on two rafts—the horses, held by their bridles, swimming at the sides.

A broad sandy desert stretched out before them beyond

the river ; but the soldiers were refreshed by their sojourn at St. Michael, and felt reassured at leaving a place of retreat and defence behind them, while the prospect of ere long measuring their prowess with the legions of the Inca infused new vigour and alacrity into their movement.

Pizarro's force now consisted of about two hundred men, fifty having been left at St. Michael—a pigmy army indeed to assail a vast, rich, and warlike empire.

Pizarro had learned that the Inca was posted with a large force at a town called Caxamalca, on the other side of the mountains ; and he had formed the desperate resolve to advance directly to that place, and to overcome the Peruvian monarch by stratagem or by force of arms, as it might chance.

The desert was soon crossed. And now the Spaniards found themselves passing through a delightful country, endowed with the richest and most luxuriant vegetation, full of luscious fruits, watered by the most picturesque streams, and inhabited by a gentle and thrifty people, who welcomed their coming with simple and eager hospitality. For many leagues it was almost a holiday march. By day they traversed shady roads or teeming fields ; at night they rested in villages, and sometimes in considerable towns, where they lodged in the very palaces provided for the Inca in his journeys through the empire.

As they approached nearer and nearer to the lofty range of the Cordilleras, which they could see looming in the dim south distance, and which they knew they should have to climb in order to reach their destination, a few of the Spaniards seemed to falter in their courage.

Their chief observed this, and resolved that if there was any discontent among his men, he would find out at once how much there was, and put a stop to it. When they were resting one day under the grateful shade of a copse of wide-spreading trees, Pizarro spoke :—

“My comrades, I have not concealed from you the perils and obstacles we are about to encounter. Fame and fortune can only be won by bearing them bravely, and overcoming them with unflagging perseverance. Now, choose each man what you will do. All who wish to return to St. Michael may do so; those alone who are entirely content to follow me need go forward.”

Nine men only availed themselves of this permission; the rest cried out eagerly that they would advance with their intrepid chief to the end.

It was not many days before the Spaniards began to find traces of the Inca's military strength. They reached villages and towns where there were Peruvian garrisons; but these manifested no hostility towards the strangers, while the caciques of the villages often welcomed them and made feasts in their honour.

At last, on coming to a town named Zaran, Pizarro learned that, some leagues farther on, a large Peruvian force was drawn up as if in hostile array. This news puzzled him. Was this force awaiting his approach in order to attack him? Had the suspicions of the Inca been already aroused? and were the Spaniards about to be challenged to a combat?

Pizarro was as conspicuous for his prudence and tact as for his valour. While he was ready to risk his life and the lives of his men in order to achieve the end he had in view, he was unwilling to sacrifice a single soldier by needless risk.

He accordingly sent De Soto forward with a small company of picked men to see what the Peruvian force intended. Meanwhile Pizarro himself, with his main army, rested at Zaran.

So long was De Soto gone that Pizarro feared that he and his companions had been overpowered, and perhaps massacred, by the Peruvians. His joy was great when, after an absence of a fortnight, his faithful lieutenant made his appearance.

De Soto and his comrades were not, however, alone. With them came a tall and stately Indian, so brilliantly arrayed that the Spaniards gazed at him with wonder. At the same time other Indians appeared, bearing a number of heavy burdens.

The mystery of these arrivals was soon solved. The tall Indian was no less a personage than the brother of the Inca of Peru, whom the Inca had sent as an envoy to Pizarro ; while the burdens borne by his countrymen were presents from the sovereign, and comprised two stone fountains, some finely woven and many-coloured cloths, sheep, deer, birds, dried fruits, honey, pepper, gold and silver vases, emeralds, and a strange perfume made of dried geese.

Pizarro welcomed his royal visitor with the respect due to his rank, and, calling an interpreter, bade the Indian sit down and talk with him. The Indian gazed in wonder at the light complexions, the attire, the glittering armour, and the weapons of the Spaniards ; for he had never seen a European before De Soto and his party arrived in the town where they had found him.

Then, turning with much dignity and grace to Pizarro, he said,—

“I have come by the command of my mighty sovereign, the Inca of Peru, to welcome you to his land, and to invite you to visit him at his camp.”

This greeting surprised Pizarro very much ; but he was too shrewd to believe the proffered hospitality sincere. He felt sure that the Indian had come to see how large a force he had. He pretended, however, to be very grateful for the Inca's invitation, and to accept it, and took great pains to entertain the royal envoy in the best manner his camp afforded.

As the Indian was about to go away, Pizarro gave him a red cap and some glass beads, which appeared to delight him exceedingly ; and bade him tell the Inca that he would cross the mountains and wait upon him in the midst of his army.

The Spaniards resumed their march with light hearts and high hopes. The very sense of danger excited them to hasten forward. Most of them were already accustomed to the din and intoxication of battle; and in the Peruvians, though less well armed and less civilized, they knew they would find brave foemen worthy of their steel. Pizarro felt that the Inca's invitation was a stratagem, and resolved that, if it came to that, he would match craft with craft, and would boldly trust himself to his fate and the valour of his men.

The little army passed through a pleasant country, but were at first much distressed for want of water. They marched three days before finding so much as a spring: they came to one at last, however; and never did cold sparkling water taste more deliciously to parched lips.

It was not long after leaving the spring that they descended into an umbrageous valley, which, they observed, was dotted with thriving towns and villages. Entering one of these, Pizarro ordered his men to encamp in an open space at the farther end of the settlement; and there they remained four days.

Pizarro conversed with the chief men and people through his Indian interpreters; and from them he learned that his march from this village to the foot of the Cordilleras would be entirely through pleasant valleys and over good roads.

He now had leisure to observe the natives; and he was much struck with their intelligence, their curious customs, and their beauty of person, which, however, was marred by their slovenliness. He noticed that while the men wore short shirts, the women had long loose robes that reached to the ground—a dress similar to that of Spanish women. These robes were often finely embroidered with gold and silver thread.

Their principal food seemed to consist of raw mutton, fish, and boiled or roasted maize. They sowed their corn and

other cereals in the meadows by the river-side, irrigating the fields by means of ditches.

Setting out once more on the fourth day, Pizarro found that the natives had told him truly about the districts through which he would pass. The adventurers marched from one valley to another, and were everywhere received peacefully, whether through friendship or fear. They found ample stores of provisions wherever they went, and took shelter in the huts when it rained.

One day they came to a wide river, the current of which was very rapid. It had been swollen by recent freshets, and it was not safe to trust the men on rafts. On the opposite bank Pizarro espied a cluster of Indian villages.

The river was an obstacle he had not foreseen, but he soon made up his mind what to do. Calling his men together, he told those who knew how to swim to step forward. A goodly number of soldiers did so—among them his brother Hernando Pizarro.

“There is only one thing to do,” said the captain; “and that is, for as many as are able to swim the river and take possession of the villages on the other bank. Otherwise they might oppose our passage.”

Hernando was the first to obey his brother's command. Unbuckling his armour and laying it on the bank, he plunged into the swollen waters, and was soon sturdily buffeting his way across. He was followed by a score of soldiers; and presently Pizarro saw them standing safe and sound on the opposite shore. Hernando walked up the bank, followed by his comrades, and was amicably received by the inhabitants of the nearest village. They lodged the Spaniards in a fortress on a slight eminence, and offered them food and drink.

But Hernando saw that, although apparently so friendly, these natives were all armed. Resolved to find out, if possible, the real truth about the Inca's intentions, he seized

one of the Indians, had him brought to the fortress, and put him to the torture.

Then the Indian confessed that the Inca, Atahualpa, was really hostile to the Spaniards, and that there were Peruvian troops both at the foot of the mountains, on their summit, and on the other side.

The next day the freshet had somewhat subsided. It was now possible for the Spaniards to cross on rafts. Some trees were cut down, and rafts made ; and in the afternoon Pizarro crossed safely with his troops, baggage, and horses.

On learning from Hernando what he had learned from the tortured Indian about the designs and preparations of the Inca, Pizarro called one of the principal Indians who had come with him from St. Michael, and asked him,—

“Have you the courage to go to Caxamalca as a spy, and bring me back tidings of the Inca’s camp?”

“I will not go as a spy,” replied the Indian ; “but if you wish, I will go as your messenger to the Inca, and will ask him what his intentions are, and how many troops he has.”

“Very well : go in that way if you please. Tell the Inca how well I have treated those who have been friendly to me, and that I only fight those who are hostile. If he will be my friend, I will become his ally ; but let him beware how he uses me treacherously.”

The Indian departed on his errand ; and Pizarro, after staying a while at the village, once more set forth towards the mountains. On the third day he found himself at the foot of the lofty Cordilleras, which looked steep and forbidding, and on the other side of which he knew that the mighty Inca and his hosts were encamped. But he was undismayed, and vigorously prepared for the formidable march before him.

CHAPTER XL

THE INCA'S COURT AND CAMP.

AT the point where Pizarro had arrived, several lofty spurs of the Cordilleras, branching out at right angles from the principal range, stretched down directly towards the sea-coast. It was at the foot of one of these that Pizarro had halted.

Between this and another spur, farther south, lay a most picturesque and verdant valley of oval shape. On that side the mountains did not, as on the side where Pizarro was, frown upon the lands below in grim, rugged, abrupt, and forbidding grandeur. Gentle and wooded and grassy slopes swept from the crags to the centre of the valley. On the round summits of hills, easy of ascent, were perched here and there the busy villages of the Peruvians, each with its walled fortress and its stately temple, and all approached by broad and well-paved roads; while in the valley were to be seen beautiful avenues of willows, and near the villages lovely gardens and fruitful orchards.

Through the valley flowed a sparkling river, its banks hid here and there by the luxuriant and giant leaves of tropical trees, here and there patched with fields of yellow maize, and, at not distant intervals, spanned by two bridges, of which the engineering skill of civilized Europe need not have been ashamed.

It was on a slight plateau, raised but little above the level

of the river, that the famous town of Caxamalca was built. Directly in front of it, stretching off toward the river, was an almost level plain, three miles long.

The town itself was imposing to the eye, and bore every evidence of skill and wealth. In its centre was a vast paved square, around which a high wall was built, and which was entered by two lofty gates. Here the people were wont to meet for their festivities and religious ceremonies, and to hobnob and gossip when the day's labours were over. In the wide and well-built streets were to be seen many houses a hundred feet long, each surrounded by a wall fifteen or sixteen feet high. These houses were often roofed with wood. On entering one of them, you would have found it divided into eight rooms, as well constructed as in a European dwelling, with walls of hewn stone surrounding a court, in the centre of which played a prettily carved stone fountain. Huge palms and other trees and shrubs afforded the inmates a refreshing shelter from the blazing sun of the tropics, while in the well-kept gardens flourished flowers of the most dazzling hues.

Two fortresses loomed above the town. One rose on a hill towards the plains, near the public square, with which it was connected by a broad flight of stone steps. The other, larger than the first, was one of the Inca's palaces, and stood on a hill of porphyry between the town and the mountains. This fort was partly hewn out of the solid porphyry; it was hollowed at the surface, so that the rock formed a wall or rampart around the main building; while two other walls below joined it, forming a sort of spiral fortification. The edifice itself was built of great blocks of fine cut stone, and without any cement; watch-towers rose at the angles; it formed a hollow square, and in the court were flowers and fountains. The fortress was approached from the city by broad steps cut in the solid rock.

Many other public buildings of attractive appearance

greeted the eye of the stranger as he wandered through Caxamalca. There was a "house of the sun" surrounded by a high wall, in the court of which was a noble grove of trees; and there were other temples, which the people might be seen entering with bowed heads and reverential step, having first been careful to take off their shoes, as the Parsees do in India, at the sacred entrance.

From Caxamalca there stretched away in the distance one of those noble roads which were justly the pride of Peru. It passed below the lower ridge of the mountains, and skirted and then crossed the river at one of its bendings. At last it crossed a broad grassy slope about three miles from the town.

It was upon this slope that the mighty Inca, Atahualpa, had fixed his camp.

Atahualpa sat in an open space in the midst of the camp, surrounded by a brilliant array of courtiers, nobles, women, and warriors. He occupied a wide, low, cushioned stool; while those who attended him stood erect, with their heads bare, and bowed down with respect. A group of gorgeously attired women lay at his feet. The figure of the Peruvian monarch was tall, robust, and majestic. His handsome, swarthy, beardless face betrayed in its expression at once dignity and courage. Piercing black eyes, somewhat blood-shot, and a resolute mouth, betrayed the Inca's pride and sternness of character, while his haughty bearing showed a consciousness of his despotic power.

While the throng about him were arrayed in dazzling robes, their persons bright with gold, many-coloured plumes, and emeralds, Atahualpa himself was more simply arrayed. On his head, the jet-black straight hair of which was cut short, he wore a circlet of fringe of very fine crimson wool, the ends being untwisted, and interwoven with gold thread. This singular crown completely covered his forehead, and reached to his eyebrows. A long, loose robe of fine wool

completely enveloped his body. On his fingers he wore large rings, and on his wrists massive bracelets of gold.

Not far from where the Inca sat was the lodging which he occupied in his camp. It was a slight structure, composed mainly of galleries that formed a broad square. In the centre was a small pavilion containing four rooms, richly hung and furnished, where the Inca slept and took his meals. The court formed by the galleries contained a blooming pleasure-garden ; while in the open space was also a great stone basin, reached by a flight of stone steps, and supplied with water by aqueducts from the mountain streams. This was so arranged that either warm or cold water could be conducted into it. It was here that the monarch took his baths.

The Inca's favourite room in the pavilion looked out upon a pleasant orchard, and his sleeping-chamber, which joined it, gave a view of the court and the basin. The walls of these rooms were plastered with shining red bitumen, which gave them a bright and gay appearance.

As Atahualpa sat in the midst of his court, it was evident that both he and his nobles were stirred by some unusual excitement. One after another, generals and envoys advanced, kneeled before him, and, with their eyes on the ground (for the Inca was too sacred a person to look upon), muttered a report of what was going on at a distance. The Inca would scarcely betray, even by a nod, that he heard what they were saying. His eyes were fixed, and directed their glance straight before him. But as report after report was brought to him, his dark features began to flush with unusual emotion, and at times his eyes flashed a fierce glance in the direction of the messenger.

Then the high priest, in whose veins ran royal blood, but who was scarcely distinguishable from the other nobles by any difference in dress, advanced, and spoke to his sovereign, as befitted his rank and sacred office, with more ease and assurance than those who had preceded him.

"Divine Child of the Sun," he said, "be not cast down at the approach of these white strangers, nor doubt the courage of your subjects and slaves. The divine orb shines above you bright and glorious: his holy rays, which illuminate your mighty empire, and impart courage to every Peruvian breast, scorch and strike dumb the ruthless and unbelieving invader, and make him fall fainting and dying on the parched desert, and even on the fruitful plain. Think, mighty monarch, that your vast and valorous hosts are gathered around you; and you in their midst cause their souls to thrill with longings to fight and die in the defence of your sacred person."

The Inca's face lit up as the high priest spoke these stirring words. With a slight smile he nodded to the venerable man, and then turned to one of the nobles standing by.

"How many did you say these strangers were?" he asked in a low voice.

"I could not answer precisely, great Inca," replied the noble, who was no other than the Inca's brother, who had visited Pizarro's camp; "but not more, I am sure, than two hundred men."

"And how are they armed?"

"They have strange, long, round weapons, the like of which I have never before seen; and when they hold them up a cloud of smoke rolls out of them and makes a deafening noise like thunder. I have heard from others that when this smoke comes out, men at which they point these weapons fall down, and shriek and die in agony."

The Inca was silent a few moments, as if in deep thought. The group of courtiers pressed as near as they dared to catch every word uttered by the royal envoy.

Then Atahualpa asked: "You spoke of some monsters they had with them?"

"Yes, great Inca,—monsters much larger than a llama, with long heads and shaggy necks, with four thin legs, that they called 'horses.' They mount these monsters, which forth-

with run swiftly about with them, and seem entirely obedient to their riders. These creatures sometimes throw up their heads, and make a hideous noise that startled me ; but the strangers told me to fear nothing, since this was only done in sport."

"Their chief sent me friendly messages : he said that he would come and visit me?"

"He did, mighty sovereign. He said that he came to make friends with you, and not as your enemy ; that his own king, who lived far away over the seas, wished to make you his brother and ally."

"But we must not trust to the words of a stranger, and of one who has already seized and plundered my country of Quito, and slain my subjects."

The Inca rose from his seat ; whereupon the whole court knelt at his feet. Gathering up his robe, he stood erect, and glanced with kindling eye along the vast encampment of his army, which dotted the hillsides and plain for a great distance around. He could see his brave soldiers—their dark faces almost hidden beneath the varicoloured cotton turbans which served them for caps, their tunics of quilted cotton tightly fitting their forms, and their bucklers covering their breasts—sauntering in groups along the river-bank, or gathered in knots before their tents ; while their arms—their bows and arrows, their slings and copper-pointed javelins, their battle-axes and swords—lay in heaps on the ground, or were arranged in piles beside the tents. The officers, in more brilliant array, were passing to and fro, now stopping to give an order, then sauntering away to their quarters. On their heads they wore a kind of helmet made of shaggy skins, from which rose, gracefully waving in the air, long and many-coloured plumes plucked from the gorgeous birds of the tropics. On the front of some of the helmets there glittered a row of large gems, and there were bucklers adorned with gold or silver mountings.

Above each tent floated a standard richly embroidered

with woollen, gold, and silver thread ; while over the quarters of the Inca might be seen the imperial banner of Peru, upon which shone a rainbow depicted in its several hues.

Atahualpa's breast heaved with proud emotion as his eye wandered from group to group and from tent to tent until it rested on the outposts, so far distant as to be scarcely visible ; and he felt that he might safely defy any invader who dared to try his fortune with so noble, brave, and numerous an armament.

Calling his courtiers and generals around him, he told them that he would make a progress through the camp. Straightway four nobles advanced with the royal litter, upon which the Inca mounted and sat down. A body of musicians made their appearance as if by magic, and soon the whole camp resounded with their weird martial melodies. At the same time the group of beautiful women, who had been lying in graceful and languid postures at the Inca's feet, began to dance about the litter, and to sing a song of praise to the sun and to their sovereign.

In an instant all was bustle and hurry through the camp. Rude trumpets summoned the soldiers to their ranks ; the officers hastened hither and thither, loudly giving their orders ; the standards and banners were brought out ; and the piles of arms melted away as each warrior grasped his weapon, and hurried into line beside his comrades.

The Inca's litter, borne upon the shoulders of four tall nobles, and surrounded by his court, generals, and women, passed in solemn state along the erect and even ranks ; and officers and soldiers bent low their heads as the Child of the Sun passed in all the refulgence of majesty before them. The high plumes which rose above his head—for he had replaced the crimson fringe by a more brilliant diadem—nodded and waved as he was borne about, and his face, as he glanced along the lines of the strong and disciplined soldiers, assumed an expression of paternal gentleness and pride.

After passing through the entire camp, the Inca returned to the open space in front of his quarters, and busied himself with issuing his commands to his various generals. Atahualpa was already a soldier of experience and proved valour. His war with his brother Huascar had tried his mettle, and had endeared him to his soldiers; and now that he was perhaps about to meet a stranger force, with mysterious weapons and a hidden purpose, he made, as he thought, every disposition to securely protect his empire.

Atahualpa reckoned with confidence on the courage, discipline, devotion, and superior numbers of his army. He counted on easily overcoming so small a force as that of the strangers in the midst of his own dominions. But he did not know the superior intelligence of the Spaniards. He never dreamed that in Pizarro he had a redoubtable rival in stratagem, who might, by a bold and shrewd device, paralyze the strength even of his numerous host, and rob him of his despotic power.

The sun went down, and the moon rose; and the Inca, having taken his bath and performed his sunset devotions, retired serenely to rest. The vast camp relapsed into silence. Nothing was heard save the regular tramp of the sentries, the plash of the fountains, and the rapid flow of the river near by. Around the imperial quarters slept in a circle the Inca's body-guard. The standards floated gently in the night breeze. No forewarning of coming disaster disturbed the slumbers of sovereign, officers, or soldiers.

Yet on his death-bed the Inca Huayna Capac had predicted, from the oracles long before delivered to his ancestors, that his empire was doomed to extinction by the hands of strangers with white complexions, and long, straight beards.

CHAPTER XII.

PIZARRO AT CAXAMALCA.

IN crossing the Cordilleras, Pizarro had the choice of two roads. One led directly to Caxamalca, where the Inca and his army were encamped ; the other took a more round-about course, having the Inca's camp on the left, and passing by Chinchá to Cuzco, the Peruvian capital. The first road passed over the most difficult and dangerous mountain heights ; by the other, the way into the centre of Peru was comparatively easy. If Pizarro went by the first, he would meet the Inca and his hosts face to face ; if by the other, he would avoid this encounter, and might, perhaps, march without serious obstacles into the midst of the land of gold.

Which should he choose ?

Some of his officers urged him to take the easier route. They pointed out the difficulties of the mountain ascent, the danger of ambuscades, the certainty of being confronted by Atahualpa, if he chose the road to Caxamalca. He would avoid all these by marching by the road on the right.

"No !" cried Pizarro. "We will not flinch, having come thus far, before the might of the Inca. Sooner or later we shall have to meet him. I have told him I would visit him ; and if I turn aside now, he would say that I feared him, and would exult over the terror he had caused me. I go by the road to Caxamalca !"

At daylight the next day, the little army, with their cap-

tain at their head, began to climb the steep crags and cliffs of the Cordilleras. It proved a most difficult and dangerous journey. At a certain height the road dwindled to a mere path; and in some places the soldiers scarcely had room to walk, and lead their horses upon it; while the cliffs rose perpendicularly hundreds of feet above them, and descended in precipices hundreds of feet below them. Deep chasms had to be crossed, and steep crags to be clambered up; and this was no easy task for men who wore the burdensome armour of that period: while, from the heat of the valley, they gradually reached heights where they were almost frozen by the cold. Several times, as they mounted slowly towards the summit, they came upon strong fortresses built upon hanging cliffs; but they happily found no hostile array of Peruvians to oppose their progress; and Pizarro began to think that the Inca, in neglecting to defend these formidable passes, had made up his mind to welcome the Spaniards as friends.

After several days of the roughest climbing, Pizarro found himself at the summit of the pass. It was towards evening, and the air was biting cold. The soldiers hastened to gather some of the stunted trees that grew sparsely on the almost bald eminence; and presently the entire crest of the mountain was lit up by great blazing fires, about which the men eagerly crowded to warm themselves.

Pizarro halted at the summit long enough to rest his weary company, and to reconnoitre the path at some distance ahead; and while he was there, he received another envoy from the Inca, who brought a present of some sheep, and repeated the message of welcome and invitation Pizarro had before received. It was from this envoy that Pizarro heard for the first time of the war that had been going on between Atahualpa and his brother Huascar, and of Atahualpa's triumph and usurpation; and, like the shrewd adventurer that he was, the idea at once struck him to turn these events to his own advantage.

The march was soon resumed through many narrow passes and defiles among the mountains, and then upon a road, which, descending on the other side, wound in zigzag turnings over the mountain spurs, and across many a deep and jagged chasm. Sometimes the Spaniards came upon villages, which they did not hesitate to occupy, though they refrained from plundering or otherwise ill-treating the inhabitants. At last they came in sight of the beautiful and wide-spreading valley where lay Caxamalca, and, beyond the town, Atahualpa's camp.

Pizarro stood upon a jutting crag, and gazed long and earnestly upon the fair and fruitful land that lay stretched out before him far as eye could reach. There, indeed, was the land which he had for so many years yearned to see, and longed to conquer, and which now seemed almost within his grasp. The supreme attempt was now near. Behind him lay ruin and death. To retreat now was not only to miserably fail, but to invite certain destruction. There was but one course to pursue—to press vigorously and bravely forward, and to strain every nerve to possess the empire which had so long glittered, a glorious but almost unattainable prize, in his dreams by day and night.

There was still no sign that his approach to Caxamalca would be resisted. The villages he passed seemed friendly, and more than one hospitable message was brought to him from the Inca as he advanced.

Descending over the green and gentle slopes into the valley, Pizarro and his comrades pitched their camp on a broad plateau. No sooner had they done so than a large party of Peruvians came up the road, bearing a choice and plenteous supply of provisions which the Inca had sent. Upon these they feasted merrily till late in the night. The atmosphere was once more mild, and it seemed to them delicious to sleep again on the green turf and in a balmy air.

The next morning Pizarro led his little army to within

three miles of Caxamalca. There he halted until the rear, led by his brother Hernando, who had come over the mountains at some distance behind him, came up. From the spot where he now found himself the Spanish adventurer could plainly discern the glistening white houses, the two fortresses perched upon their rocks, and the square temples of the town; and extending his glance beyond, he could just see the white tents of the Inca's camp dotting the plain and hillsides in the hazy distance.

It may be that at this moment the proud and brave heart of the cavalier sank for an instant within him as he gazed upon the vast encampment, and realized what a mighty force he was about to brave. If so, he soon recovered himself, and his face assumed an expression of grim determination, which betrayed his resolve to stake all in the attempt to conquer.

From his distant camp, too, the Inca Atahualpa gazed long and wonderingly at the procession of Spanish horsemen and soldiers, with their flying banners and their glittering mail, as they streamed along the highroad, and approached, unresisted, nearer and nearer to the famous town. For Pizarro had once more given the order to "Forward march!" and, as the Inca looked, he could just see the van of the Spanish column marching three deep, and entering the gates of Caxamalca.

Pizarro advanced at the head of his troops. As he entered the streets he was surprised to find them quite deserted. The houses were all closed, as if the inhabitants feared that the strangers would assail them, and only here and there did he see a stray Peruvian hastening around a corner to avoid being observed.

The procession moved in military order directly to the public square. Here their tents were pitched in a hurry, for at this moment a violent hail-storm burst over the town. It was just at dusk, on the 15th of November 1532, that Pizarro thus established himself at Caxamalca.

Every precaution was necessary to prevent a surprise. Pizarro could not be sure of the Inca's real purpose. It might well be that he only waited to decoy the Spaniards into the town, in order to surround them with his infinitely more numerous force, and annihilate them then and there. Pizarro, therefore, posted his cavalry at convenient points, and sent out squads to reconnoitre the vicinity. No signs of hostility, however, betrayed themselves, and the Spaniards slept peacefully through the night in some low huts that surrounded the square.

No time was to be lost in finding out the Inca's real intentions. So the next morning Pizarro called De Soto to him, and told him to take fifteen horsemen, proceed to the Inca's camp, seek an audience of the monarch, and see if the Spaniards would be welcomed in Peru.

When the commander had given these orders, his brother Hernando, who was standing by, said,—

“I fear, sir, that fifteen horsemen will not be enough to send to the Inca's camp. If he should choose to attack them, they would soon be destroyed. We have in all sixty cavalry, and can spare twenty more, and still leave enough behind to act as sentries on the outskirts of the town.”

“Very well,” replied Pizarro: “do you take twenty more good horsemen, and yourself follow De Soto to the Inca.”

The cavalcade set out, and was soon upon the highway leading to the Peruvian camp. At its head rode a trumpeter, who awoke the echoes of the lovely valley with loud blasts, and thus announced to the Inca the approach of the envoys. Rapidly they galloped over the well-built road; and when they came to the bridge, instead of crossing it (for they feared, lest by accident or design, it might not hold them), they plunged their horses into the stream, and ascended the bank in safety on the other side.

Here they found a large force of Peruvian warriors drawn up in line, with their lances in rest and their bows in their

hands. For a moment De Soto suspected that he was about to be attacked, and ordered his cavalymen to keep close together; but one of the Peruvian officers advanced, made friendly signs, and offered to conduct the party into the presence of the Inca. Hernando Pizarro now came up with his twenty horsemen, and accompanied De Soto to the imperial camp.

Atahualpa had been apprised of their approach, and was once more seated, surrounded by his brilliantly-attired court and beautiful women, on the lawn in front of his pavilion. De Soto advanced on horseback in the midst of the throng, followed by Hernando and several other cavaliers, and stopped just in front of the Inca. All preserved complete silence. The Peruvians gazed in wonder and some fear at the richly-caparisoned horses, and their riders in shining armour; the Spaniards stared curiously back, but kept a bold and proud front.

Then Hernando Pizarro, through an interpreter, addressed the Peruvian monarch.

"Our commander," he said, "has sent us hither to assure you of his friendship and good-will. We are the subjects of a great and mighty prince across the ocean, who has vast and unconquerable dominions, and who seeks allies the world over. We have come to render homage to your power, and to offer you the aid of our arms in your battles."

The Inca had sat perfectly motionless, with his eyes bent on the ground, ever since the Spaniards had made their appearance. While Hernando was speaking he did not move a muscle, or seem to hear a word that was said. There was a moment of silence after Hernando had ceased; then a tall and dark-featured noble, more gorgeously dressed than the others, advanced a step, and said,—

"It is well."

Another interval of silence followed; but Hernando, who shared his brother's bold spirit, would not give up thus.

He again addressed the Inca, and asked what reception it was intended to give the Spaniards in Peru. At this Atahualpa slightly raised his head, and replied, in a low, measured tone,—

“This is a feast-day with us. To-morrow I will go and visit your commander, attended by my chiefs. Let him remain in peace at Caxamalca. When I see him we will talk of what is to be done.”

The Inca then bowed, as if to end the interview; and raising his eyes as he did so, they rested with an expression of curiosity upon the noble white war-horse upon which De Soto was mounted. Perceiving that the Inca’s attention was fixed upon his steed, De Soto thought that he would exhibit his good qualities. He put spurs to the horse, which bounded, reared, and plunged about the field, then wheeled around and around, and reared upon his hind legs. De Soto then suddenly tightened the rein and brought the horse up short, so near the Inca that the foam from the animal’s mouth sprinkled the Inca’s robe. But Atahualpa did not shrink a hair-breadth, and his countenance remained stolidly immovable.

De Soto and his party were then invited in one of the larger tents to such good cheer as Peru afforded; and they gazed with covetous eyes upon the heavy golden goblets, studded with emeralds, which the women brought to them foaming with “chicha,” a favourite Peruvian beverage made of maize.

They now returned to Caxamalca to tell of the things that they had seen. Their story of the mighty armament of the Inca, the sturdy frames and good discipline of his soldiers, and the suspicious reception they had met with, caused many a stalwart heart in the Spanish camp to sink with dismay.

How could a mere handful of men, however brave, and however well armed, cope with a host numbering thousands

and tens of thousands? How could they defy such an army, arrayed on its own ground, at its base of supplies, and with which the entire surrounding population claimed kindred and brotherhood?

That night there were sombre murmurs in the squares of Caxamalca, and the mutterings of discontent could not long be kept from Pizarro's ears. For his part, he too had thought of the tremendous odds against him, of the folly of braving the Peruvians with his own little force, of the dangers that frowned grimly upon him from every side.

Pizarro knew well he could not retreat. The avenging onset of the Peruvians would overtake and destroy him before he could reach the spurs of the Cordilleras; or, if he escaped into the bleak mountain defiles, it would be to die a miserable death of exposure and starvation.

Quickly, therefore, he made up his mind what to do; but the plan he formed was so strange and daring that he dared not at first confide it even to his officers. He went with a cheerful and confident countenance among his men. He roused their spirits by his reassuring voice and his defiant words. He told them that they were on the eve of an unlooked-for triumph, and he awoke all their pride and courage by ridiculing their fears. He reminded them that the Peruvians were heathen, while they were Christians, and persuaded them that in conquering Peru they would merit the approval of God, and receive the choicest blessings of the Church.

Having thus suppressed the discontent which had begun to spread in his camp, he called De Soto, his brother Hernando, and several others, into his tent.

A light flickered feebly on a rude table in the centre of the tent. Seating himself on a stool, and motioning the others to sit down also, the intrepid chief leaned his arms upon the table, and his face assumed a serious and resolute expression.

"My comrades," said he, "we are, as you know, in a desperate situation. To openly defy the Inca would be the greatest folly. His army outnumbers us, it may be, a thousand to one. It is fully equipped, composed of strong and brave men, who would fight desperately for their country. We cannot throw down the gage of battle. Nor can we retreat; to do so would be, at best, to have failed in the great undertaking of our lives. Even if we got safely back to Panama, we should be despised and hooted at, and find ourselves impoverished, and perhaps outcasts. But we should not get back. We cannot leave this country safely except as conquerors. To turn and fly would be as certain destruction as to march to-morrow with two hundred men against a camp containing two hundred thousand."

"What then, commander, do you propose?" eagerly asked the fiery-hearted De Soto. "Shall we remain here at Caxamalca and defend ourselves to the last?"

"We shall remain here, but not to enter upon a desperate defence. I have thought of a plan by the execution of which alone success is possible. To-morrow the Inca comes to visit us in our camp. He will come with some force, to be sure, but not a large one. He will not dream of any harm with his great army lying but a league distant. When he comes I shall take him prisoner."

"Take the Inca prisoner!" exclaimed the others.

"Why not?" retorted Pizarro, looking sternly around. "Have you forgotten Hernando Cortez? He went to Mexico, as we have come to Peru, with a paltry force. He found there, as we do here, a mighty prince surrounded by a brilliant court and a vast army. He entered a city of that prince as we have of the Inca; he decoyed Montezuma to his quarters; he made him a prisoner; and spite of Montezuma's court and army and riches, Cortez became the conqueror of Mexico."

"It is a perilous plan!" cried De Soto.

"But is not our situation perilous?" returned Pizarro. "If Cortez succeeded, so may we. Had Cortez failed, his fate would have been what ours will be if we too fail. The most resolute daring alone will save us, and we might as well risk our lives in strategy as in conflict or retreat. At the least, once in possession of the Inca, we shall have the strongest pledge of our safety. The Peruvians will not dare to lay hands on us when by a single blow we can take the Inca's life."

His comrades saw and felt the force of his words, and offered no further objection. They declared themselves ready and eager to take their share in the desperate plot, and left the commander's tent to prepare for the morrow. Sentries were mounted at every point which it was necessary to guard, and lookouts were posted on the fortress towers. The fires of Atahualpa's camp could be distinctly seen on the hill and plain three miles away. The broad highroad between the town and the camp was perfectly visible as far as the river; and had a Peruvian force ventured to approach by it, the alarm could have been given in an instant, and the Spaniards called to arms.

But, as on the night before, nothing occurred to disturb the rest of the adventurers. The faithful sentinels, as they paced up and down, looked in vain for any signs of a hostile attack; and the soldiers, lying with their arquebuses loaded at their side, forgot the terrible dangers of their situation in profound slumber.

Pizarro alone did not close his eyes on the eve of his rash attempt. He walked to and fro in his tent, his brow knit in deep cogitation of the means by which he should put it in execution. By morning he had thought it all out; and when the trumpets called officers and men to their breakfast, he met them with a cheerful and confident mien.

CHAPTER XIII.

ATAHUALPA A PRISONER.

THE sun, the deity of the Peruvians, rose bright and warm on the morning of Saturday, November 16, 1532, as if to cheer his worshippers with his refulgence, and to assure them of his celestial protection.

As his rays struck the white shining walls of Caxamalca, they lit up a camp full of bustle and preparation. Pizarro had now imparted his project to his men, and a new energy seemed to animate their movements. In two halls, which formed two of the sides of the square, and were connected with it by a number of high doors, the Spanish cavalry, mounted and armed, took up their positions. The main body of the infantry occupied a third hall similarly situated; while a small force under Candia was stationed in the fortress that rose just above the square, with which it communicated by a flight of stone stairs. When these dispositions had been made, the square seemed empty; for these soldiers were all hidden from view, and only Pizarro and a few of his officers appeared in the open space.

Pizarro gave the order that no man should stir from his place until he himself should wave a handkerchief as a signal. When he did this they were to issue forth in regular lines, and perform whatever task their officers commanded. Their lives and fortunes, he told them, were at

stake, and hung upon the presence of mind and promptness with which they should act at the decisive moment.

The armour worn by the soldiers had been newly furnished, so that it shone brightly ; bells had been fastened to the harness of the horses ; and the soldiers had been regaled with an ample breakfast, that they might be in condition for vigorous service. The final preparation was the performance of mass by the priests, who prayed fervently that the blessings of God might attend Pizarro's design ; and the soldiers solemnly chanted a hymn at the end.

The morning wore away, and yet there were no signs of the Inca's approach. Pizarro began to grow uneasy. He was greatly relieved when a sentry announced that a Peruvian envoy had appeared at the gate, and asked to be admitted to the Spanish chief.

"Let him enter," said Pizarro.

The Peruvian advanced cautiously, and glanced with surprise around the almost empty square. He had expected to see an armament in brilliant array. Approaching Pizarro with more confidence, he spoke to him through an interpreter.

"The Inca has sent me to tell you that he will come and see you, and that he will bring with him an armed force, for your men that went yesterday to the royal camp were armed. And he would have you send to him a Christian to attend him hither."

"Tell your master that he may come when and how he pleases, and he shall be welcomed as a friend and a brother ; but I shall send him no Christian, since that is not our custom."

This envoy had not been gone long before another came and sought an interview with Pizarro. He soon made known his errand.

"The Inca does not wish to bring his soldiers all armed, and some that will come with him will be unarmed. He

desires to lodge them in the town; and he himself will lodge here in the square, in the house called 'The House of the Serpent,' because it is adorned with a serpent of stone."

"So be it," replied Pizarro; "only I pray that he may come quickly, for I am anxious to see him."

The messenger hastened back to the Inca's camp; and early in the afternoon Pizarro, who had gone up into the fortress to watch for Atahualpa's approach, observed the plain alive with the Peruvian legions, who were evidently forming and advancing upon the road towards Caxamalca. A long body would march some distance along the road and then halt until other troops came up with them. Pizarro, as they came nearer, saw their plumes waving and their banners floating in the air, and heard faintly the strains of their strange, warlike music.

It seemed to him as if they would never cease pouring out of the camp upon the road. Within an hour the highway fairly swarmed with the Inca's troops, who approached in disciplined order and in three distinct divisions.

At last the vanguard of the Peruvians reached a plain not more than a third of a mile from the town. Here, Pizarro remarked, they came to a halt, and the army gathered more and more dense upon the plain. This puzzled him. Were they about to form in battle array and descend upon him in force? or were they simply pausing for rest, or perhaps to remain on the plain while the Inca paid his visit? The last supposition proved to be correct.

A messenger presently came to Pizarro with word from Atahualpa that he intended to stay on the plain that night, and that he would visit him on the morrow.

This was not at all what Pizarro wished. His preparations to receive the Inca were all complete. If the Peruvian monarch failed to come now his carefully laid scheme might be defeated.

So he sent back an earnest request that the Inca should not delay his visit.

"Tell him," said Pizarro, "that I await him at supper, and that I shall not sup until he comes ; and let him hasten, that I may welcome him in the square before it is dark."

This pressing invitation seemed to have an immediate effect. Pizarro knew that the Inca had decided to yield to his request by the bustle and hurry in the Peruvian camp which at once followed the messenger's return.

Presently a portion of the great mass of Peruvians began to separate from the rest, and to move directly towards the town. Pizarro hastened from point to point to tell his officers that the Inca was really coming, and to see for the last time that everything was ready and in order.

Pizarro had scarcely returned to the square, where he took up his position, surrounded by his brothers, De Soto, and a few other officers, when the van of the Peruvian procession entered the gate. This consisted of a crowd of Indians, attired in curious costumes of many colours, the figures on their tunics being alternate squares of white and red like a chess-board. They carried in their hands large branches of trees, which served as brooms with which to sweep the road in the Inca's path. While some of them swept, others kept stooping down, and with great rapidity and skill picked up the straws and sticks that were strewn in the way.

These were followed at a brief interval by three battalions of men in fantastic attire, who came along singing and dancing ; after whom advanced a brilliant company of warriors of noble birth, wearing metal breastplates and crown-like helmets of silver and gold, that glittered in the rays of the fast-sinking sun.

Company after company now filed in quick succession into the square, some wearing tunics of brilliant blue ; others snow-white robes, and bearing maces of copper and silver ; and yet others with jewelled helmets of skin, and arrayed in

the gaudiest attire, and ornaments of gems and gold. None of them seemed to be armed ; but it turned out that beneath their tunics nearly all carried concealed small darts, slings, and stones. There were, perhaps, five or six thousand.

At last there occurred a long break in the procession ; and in another moment the Inca appeared, seated on a throne of massive gold upon a lofty litter, and surrounded by other litters on which sat many of his great nobles. It was a most imposing sight to see this mighty monarch seated high above the heads of those who surrounded him, the gorgeous plumes that adorned his diadem waving and nodding in the air, the blood-red fringe covering his swarthy brow, his long robe falling in heavy folds over the sides of the glittering litter, and a wide collar of large and dazzling emeralds fastened about his neck ; while on either side of the litter gathered a group of courtiers, more brilliantly arrayed than any who had yet entered the square, and wearing coronets of silver and gold.

As Atahualpa was borne forward, his countenance betrayed the serene expression of true majesty, that disdained to show emotion even if he felt it. He glanced quietly around, and looked at the little group of Spanish chiefs, who awaited him at the farther end of the square, with an air of quiet and confident dignity.

Following the *cortége* of the Inca came other battalions of Peruvian troops, so that in no long time the square seemed filled with them. A small fortress in one corner of the square was occupied by several of these companies. Atahualpa ordered the men who bore him to stop in the centre of the open space. There he awaited Pizarro's movements.

No sooner had the litter come to a standstill than a Spanish monk named Friar Vicente, in his cowl, girdle of rope, and rosary, and holding in one hand a large cross, and in the other a Bible, advanced slowly towards the Inca, with a Peruvian interpreter at his side.

The Inca gazed at him curiously, and so did all the Peruvians. They had become used to the appearance of the Spanish soldiers, but they had not before seen a monk.

The friar stood just beneath the litter, and, raising his eyes to Atahualpa, began to speak in a solemn and measured voice. The interpreter translated his words to the Inca.

"I am a priest of God," he said, "and teach Christians; and I have come also to teach you. I teach what God tells his people in this book. In the name of God and of the Christians, I beseech you to be their friend. This is God's will, and it will be for your good. Go and speak to the commander, who is waiting for you."

Atahualpa, seeing the Bible, held out his hand to take it. The monk gave it to him closed. The Inca turned it over, and looked at it curiously, and tried to open it, but did not know how. Vicente, perceiving this, stretched out his hand as if to show him; when the Inca, frowning upon him, struck him on the arm with the Bible, and at last succeeded in opening it himself. No sooner had he done so than he threw it angrily upon the ground, and, turning to the monk, answered him through an interpreter:—

"I know well how you have acted on the way hither. You have ill-treated my chiefs, and you have taken cloth from my storehouses."

Vicente was astonished to hear this unfriendly speech, and eagerly replied,—

"No, great sovereign; they were Indians who took the cloth, and our commander ordered them to be punished."

"I shall remain here," retorted Atahualpa sternly, "till it has all been restored to me."

The monk then continued to exhort the Inca to submit to the authority of the King of Spain, to become a Christian, and to abandon the idolatry of the sun. At this Atahualpa's eyes flashed; and, turning proudly upon Vicente, he said,—

"I will never be the vassal of any potentate, however

mighty. I will be friends with your royal master ; but I am greater than he. I will not be a Christian, but, as ever, worship my deity who shines in the heavens, and who even now sheds his parting rays upon me."

As he spoke, the Inca inclined his head toward the sun, which was just sinking behind the distant hills.

Vicente despaired of making any impression upon the Inca's mind, and turning, walked rapidly to the spot where Pizarro was impatiently awaiting the result of his interview, at the farther end of the square.

"Sir," exclaimed the monk, "the infidel casts the Bible in the dust, and rejects my plea that he should become a Christian ! See you not what is taking place ? Why do you treat longer with this proud dog, when the plain is covered with Indians ? Fall upon him, bold cavalier ! I absolve you !"

Pizarro saw that the moment had come to put his bold design in execution. Hastily putting on a thick cotton tunic, the better to protect his person, and drawing his sword, he called upon his companions to follow him, and pushed hurriedly through the throng of Peruvians towards the Inca's litter. As he went, he waved a white handkerchief above his head. Advancing straight to the Inca, he roughly seized him by the arm, and cried out in a stentorian voice,—

"Santiago."

This was the watchword for action. Instantly guns were fired from the fortress and the different halls, filling the Peruvians with confusion and dismay. Out rushed the Spaniards, mounted and on foot, charging fiercely upon the bewildered courtiers and soldiers of the Inca, the horses riding down the huddled and frightened groups, and the firing of the guns creating clouds of smoke and a terrific uproar.

The poor Peruvians were completely taken by surprise, and did not know which way to turn or what to do. Many of them had arms hidden beneath their coats : but so sudden

had been the onset of the Spaniards, that they had no time to extricate them ; nor could they have used them if they had. In the wildest panic they ran hither and thither, shrieking out, and terrified beyond expression by the tramping of the horses, which now seemed to them indeed ferocious monsters. Some hurried to the gates which issued from the square into the streets of the town ; but there, alas ! they found companies of Spaniards guarding the exits, who fired upon the wretched Peruvians as they approached, killing and wounding them, and driving them back into the square again.

While the foot-soldiers dealt deadly havoc with their guns, the cavalry, plunging their horses among the groups that crouched trembling near the walls, slashed right and left with their sabres, and mowed the Peruvians down like grass.

Soon the square was filled with the bodies of the dead and the dying, with thick clouds of smoke, and the terrible din of conflict. At one point only did the Peruvians attempt to make a resolute stand. The sacred person of the Inca was in danger. A crowd of nobles and soldiers, at the first onset, had gathered close around the imperial litter, resolved to defend the precious life of their sovereign to the last extremity. These heroic men fought desperately. They grasped the Spaniards, hurled them from their steeds, struggled one against a dozen, and for a time held them at bay.

All this time Pizarro, with drawn sword, kept a firm grip on the Inca's arm. The litter swayed to and fro with the shock of the conflict ; but the cavalier was determined that his splendid prisoner should not escape him. At last the heroic nobles, who had been so bravely defending the person of their monarch, were subdued, and one and all of them lay dead or wounded at the foot of the litter.

To rush upon the bearers of the litter and despatch them was the work of a moment. The litter fell to the ground ; and Pizarro now clutched Atahualpa, who tottered and nearly fell with the shock, tightly by the arm. Some of the Span-

iards, their thirst for blood fiercely aroused, were eager to put the Inca to instant death ; but Pizarro had the presence of mind to see that this would ruin his project. He protected the Inca with his own body, and in doing so received from one of his soldiers a slight wound in the hand.

By this time the havoc of the Peruvians was nearly over. But few had escaped : almost the entire force which had accompanied the unfortunate Inca within the square were stretched upon its surface.

Atahualpa, as he was led away, seemed completely crest-fallen and utterly dazed by what had been passing before him. He hung his head, as one from whom all glory had departed, who had tasted humiliation to the dregs.

Pizarro conducted his royal prisoner to his own quarters. There Atahualpa was stripped of his gorgeous robe and jewels, and dressed in a more simple Peruvian costume ; and then he was brought into the apartment where Pizarro awaited him at supper.

It was now night, and the table, with its fare of game, fruit, and vegetables, was dimly lighted by torches borne by a line of soldiers. Without, the dismal cries of the wounded, and the bustle made by the Spaniards in securing the prisoners that had been taken, might still be heard.

The Inca, with a sad, dejected face, took a seat, as he was ordered, beside his captor ; but though tempting viands were set before him, and he was still treated with some ceremony and respect, he could not be persuaded to touch a morsel.

Pizarro, having finished supping, turned to his prisoner, and spoke to him sternly through an interpreter : " Do not deceive yourself, Inca of Peru. We are the subjects of a mighty king, mightier than you. We have come to conquer this land in his name, to make you his vassal, and to convert you to be a Christian, so that you may not lead a heathen life as you have done. This is why we, so few, have been able to overcome your vast army."

The Inca shook his head sorrowfully, and in an absent way replied, "I was deceived by my captains. They told me not to fear the Spaniards, but to come forward boldly with my army and attack them. I desired to come in peace, but they prevented me. I now see that the Spaniards are brave and daring. I have suffered the fortune of war."

"You have nothing to fear," said Pizarro, "if you submit to us quietly. I war only upon my enemies. If you keep faith with me, I will protect you."

Pizarro, though brave and brilliant in exploits, was both perfidious and cruel in his treatment of the Inca, and in his proceedings in Peru. We may admire his courage and perseverance, his self-reliance and military genius, but we cannot but condemn many of his acts as barbarous and bloodthirsty, and his objects as covetous and selfish.

While Pizarro was supping with the captive Inca, a body of Spanish cavalry, excited by their triumph, ventured out of the town, and pursued along the highway the Peruvians who had succeeded in escaping from the square. They approached the broad field where Atahualpa's main army was still bivouacked, and exulted to see that the camp was in the utmost confusion, and that the Peruvian troops, seized by a terrible panic, were making hasty preparations for flight.

They succeeded in taking a large number of prisoners. Before, however, they could infuse new terror into the already panic-stricken army, they were recalled to Caxamalca by the shrill voices of the trumpets. Re-entering the square, they found all their comrades drawn up in order, and Pizarro and his lieutenants in their midst.

When the prisoners had been huddled together in the buildings near by, and a watchful guard had been put over them, Pizarro, standing upon the broken litter which, but a few hours before, had brought the Inca in such state and splendour to the square, addressed his little army.

"Let us give hearty thanks, my comrades," said he, "for

the great miracle we have this day performed. Without God's aid we could not have entered this land at all, much less have overcome so mighty a host. You have done nobly : retire to rest, and sleep soundly on your laurels. But remember that, although the victory is ours, we must still be vigilant. The Peruvians are defeated, but they are cunning and skilful in war. They will strain every nerve to rescue the Inca. There yet remains much to be done. This night, and every night, the strictest watch must be kept, the rounds must be gone regularly, and we must be prepared for everything."

The soldiers were then dismissed to their quarters. The unfortunate Inca was provided with a bed in Pizarro's own chamber, and was allowed to have such of his women as he chose to wait upon him. A watchful guard was put over him ; although Pizarro was careful that Atahualpa should not perceive those who guarded him.

The captor and the captive on that memorable night slept side by side.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE INCA'S DOOM.

THE broad square presented next morning a most dismal aspect. The bodies of the massacred Peruvians, in all their gay attire, lay strewn over the grass or piled up in ghastly heaps under the bright rays of the sun. At least two thousand of the Inca's nobles and soldiers were stretched out there, the victims of Pizarro's snare, martyrs to their loyalty.

It was no light task to clear the square of its dreary burden. The Peruvian prisoners were brought out under guard, and compelled to dig pits, and to bury their dead countrymen in them ; while the poor Inca looked mournfully on from the window of his prison.

Pizarro knew that no time must be lost in following up his bloody triumph. He despatched a force of thirty horsemen to the camp where Atahualpa had awaited his coming, three miles away, to disperse the remains of the Peruvian army and seize such plunder as they could.

Though these cavaliers were so few, they found their work an easy one. The camp was in the wildest confusion. There yet remained thousands of Peruvian troops—enough to have annihilated Pizarro and all his men, could they have rallied and attacked him. But they had lost their chief, their valiant monarch. There was no one to lead them ; and such was their terror at what had taken place, that they thought of nothing but flight.

The Spaniards captured many prisoners, among them a number of women, some of whom were wives of the Inca. They also took a great quantity of sheep which had been collected to feed the Inca's army. But what most dazzled and delighted Pizarro was the amount of treasure they brought in.

In the Inca's pavilion they had found riches beyond their expectations. Massive gold plates, jars, cups, and ornamental basins, necklaces, rings, and bracelets, and many large, brilliant emeralds, were gathered, and laid by the cavaliers at Pizarro's feet. This was only a foretaste of the wealth he was destined to discover.

Pizarro was puzzled what to do with the great number of Peruvian prisoners that had been taken. He could not carry them with him, nor could he spare any of his men to stay behind and guard them. So he ordered his soldiers to choose such prisoners as they liked, to act as their servants; and the rest of the Peruvians he set free, to return to their homes. Some of the more brutal of his soldiers wished to slaughter them all, or at least to cut off their hands, and thus render them unable to fight; but Pizarro sternly reproved them, and declared that he would not be guilty of such cruelty.

So many sheep were brought in that, after killing as many as his army could eat and as could be preserved, he let the rest loose on the mountains. Although he was eager to continue his conquest, Pizarro remained some time at Caxamalca, in order to rest his men and to make every preparation for a vigorous campaign. He hoped, too, to receive reinforcements from St. Michael, and perhaps from Panama; for he lost no time in sending home the news of his amazing victory. Meanwhile he employed the time in strengthening the fortifications of Caxamalca, and in erecting a church there, with a view to settling it as a Spanish colony.

He availed himself of this period to converse often with

his royal prisoner, and to try to reconcile him to his lot. Atahualpa's spirits, after the first few days, somewhat revived. He learned to speak Spanish very quickly; and Pizarro taught him to play chess and cards, which the poor captive seemed to enjoy very much.

The Inca also betrayed a great deal of enthusiasm in learning to read and write Spanish. He was puzzled to know whether the Spaniards were able to read by instinct, or whether they had to learn as he did. So he one day asked a soldier who was guarding him to write the word "God" on his thumb-nail; and when the soldier had done so, Atahualpa went around and showed it to the other soldiers, and asked them to read it. He was surprised to hear them all read it alike. Pizarro happened to come in at this moment; and the Inca ran to him and held up his thumb, and begged Pizarro to read it too. Pizarro looked at the word, coloured up, and at last was forced to own that he could not read. After this the Inca seemed to regard him with less respect and awe than before.

On another occasion, when Pizarro and his royal captive were sitting at the door of their quarters, Atahualpa became very talkative, and gave Pizarro a long account of what had happened in recent years in Peru. He told Pizarro about his father Huayna Capac's wars; how he and his brother Huascar had quarrelled; and how it came to pass that he, and not Huascar, was reigning over the empire. Then after sitting silent for some time in deep thought, the Inca said,—

"If you will let me go free, commander, I will not only deliver my brother Huascar into your hands, but I will give you gold enough to half fill a large room: you shall have vases and jars, and bars of gold piled ten feet high. And I will do yet more: you shall have silver enough to fill a large chamber twice over."

"How soon can you do this?"

"In two months' time."

"Whence will you obtain all this wealth?"

"At my capital of Cuzco, many leagues away."

"How long will it take your messengers to go thither?"

"When they are sent on important errands they run from village to village, and could reach Cuzco in fifteen days."

"Very well: if you do as you say you shall be free."

The Inca sprang joyfully to his feet and beckoned to a Peruvian who was standing near.

"Hasten to Cuzco," said he, speaking rapidly, "and order my chief men there to send two thousand men hither, bearing all the gold and silver they can carry."

The Peruvian started at once, and soon was seen trotting along the highway, and disappearing at the turning of the road.

Although the Inca was kept a prisoner, Pizarro permitted him to have his wives to keep him company and his servants to wait upon him. When his nobles came to visit him they were freely admitted to his presence; and Pizarro observed that they came before their captive sovereign with the same ceremonies of awe and reverence to which the Inca was accustomed when in his glory.

It may be remembered that Atahualpa, not long before Pizarro's arrival in Peru, had defeated and captured his elder brother, the Inca Huascar, and had caused him to be shut up in a distant fortress.

As soon as Huascar heard of Pizarro's victory he contrived to send a message to him, that if the Spaniards would set him free he would give them twice as much gold and silver as Atahualpa had promised. Unfortunately for him, Atahualpa, who mortally feared his brother's release, somehow heard of this offer, and resolved that Huascar should be put to death. He was still more alarmed when Pizarro declared that he would have Huascar brought before him, and would decide between the brothers.

Atahualpa accordingly sent secret orders in all haste to some of his nobles to kill Huascar; and as they were bringing him on the road to Caxamalca, Huascar was suddenly seized near a river and hurled into the deep and rapid stream, and he sank screaming into its waters.

Pizarro was enraged when he heard this, and swore to himself that he would visit this crime upon Atahualpa's own head. It was not so much that the rough Spanish cavalier was shocked by the enormity of the deed as that it gave him an excuse to deal with the captive Inca as he pleased.

In due time the treasure promised by Atahualpa as his ransom began to arrive; and the eyes of the Spaniards sparkled with avarice as they saw the glittering heaps of golden plate, the ewers and basins and vases, and bars of the pure precious metal, so heavy that it took three or four men to lift them.

"It is indeed," they exclaimed, "a land of gold! We shall return laden with riches. Let us hasten and complete the conquest of this wonderful empire!"

Pizarro was as eager as the rest to push on; but before doing so he thought it wise that the country beyond should be explored. Rumours had reached him of the gathering of a Peruvian army with the intent to attack him and rescue the Inca; and with his little force it was, above all, important to run as few risks as possible.

So he sent out his brother Hernando on an expedition southward to explore the country, find out if there were any evidences of resistance, gather what treasure he could, and see what the disposition of the people was.

Hernando took with him twenty horsemen and as many foot-soldiers, and finding broad and even highroads, marched rapidly through the land as far as a great town called Pachacamac, where he found a splendid temple erected to a great Peruvian deity of the same name. Everywhere on

the way he was received with a friendly welcome that amazed him. Sometimes the Peruvian villagers would come out to meet him, singing and dancing, and playing upon curious instruments; sometimes he found banquets already spread, with which to regale him and his comrades. Nowhere was there the least sign of hostility to his advance.

Arriving at Pachacamac, Hernando marched straight to the great temple of which he had heard so much; and the simple natives trembled with horror to see the Spaniards tramp boldly into the sacred edifice, tear down the image of their god, and shatter it to pieces on the pavement. This Hernando did because he professed to be horrified by the idolatry of the Peruvians, and wished to show them how easily a Christian could destroy their most dread deities.

Having found, to his sore disappointment, that the treasures of Pachacamac, which had lured him thither, had been hurriedly removed and hidden by the priests, he resumed his march, and crossing the Cordilleras, reached another famous place called Xauxa.

On this march Hernando was more and more amazed at every step to find how abundant were gold and silver in Peru. While crossing the mountains some of the horses lost their shoes; and as Hernando found no iron, but plenty of silver, he had silver shoes made for them.

He had scarcely arrived at Xauxa, which proved to be a large and prosperous town, when he heard that a great Peruvian general named Callcuchima, with no less than thirty-five thousand men, was encamped a few miles distant. This news was alarming; but Hernando Pizarro was as brave and bold as his brother, and he promptly sent to the general and asked him to visit him at Xauxa. This Callcuchima did; and so far from thinking of attacking the Spaniards, even with his large force, he allowed Hernando to persuade him to return with him and visit the captive sovereign at Caxamalca.

Callcuchima was a noble, soldierly-looking old man, with flowing white hair, and a stalwart, erect frame. As he passed with Hernando Pizarro along the broad highroad that led from Xauxa to Caxamalca, borne on a high litter, and surrounded by a numerous array of attendants, the simple people crowded by the roadside and greeted him with the respect and awe due to his high military rank. It was evident that he was one of the chief men of Peru.

It seems strange that so powerful and brave a general should consent to leave a force of thirty-five thousand men and submissively follow a mere handful of Spaniards to a place where the captors of his sovereign were in command. But it must be remembered that all Peru was panic-stricken by Pizarro's bold stratagem and miraculous success. The people looked upon the Spaniards, who had so easily overcome the Child of the Sun, as beings more than human. Their terrible weapons, their horses, those monsters upon which they rode, appeared to prove that they were a higher order of beings. This terror and fright extended throughout the empire, and for a while paralyzed all resistance.

The march back to Caxamalca was made rapidly and without obstacle. Hernando hastened to tell his brother of the wonderful things he had seen ; of the submission of the people everywhere ; of the shattering of the idol at Pachacamac ; of the abundance of gold, silver, and gems which he had found at every turn ; and of his success in bringing Callcuchima, the ablest of the Inca's generals, back with him.

The interview between the captive Inca and his faithful old warrior was very touching. Before entering the presence of his unhappy sovereign, Callcuchima reverentially took off his shoes, uncovered his gray head, and placed a bundle on his back. Approaching the Inca, he prostrated himself on the ground, and humbly kissed the royal feet and hands. Then raising his hands aloft, as the tears streamed down his wrinkled cheeks, he exclaimed with a sob,—

“Ah, would that I had been here! then this great misfortune would never have happened.”

The Inca, however, betrayed no emotion. He greeted the old soldier calmly, and after a brief interview dismissed him with a haughty wave of his hand.

While Hernando was marching to Pachacamac and back, Pizarro sent another expedition in a different direction. All the treasure that Atahualpa had promised had not arrived, and Pizarro was resolved to lose no portion of the booty. So, demanding of the Inca a safe-conduct, he despatched three cavaliers, who were accompanied by the Inca's brother, to Cuzco, the capital of Peru, to hasten the sending forward of the ransom, and to observe and report what they saw on the way and in the city.

Soon after Hernando's arrival these cavaliers also returned. They had fully as marvellous a tale to tell as Hernando. Thanks to the Inca's orders to his people, they had everywhere been received with honour and hospitality. The great road to Cuzco they described as a wonder of engineering science; and they had been carried over it almost the entire way—a distance of six hundred miles—in chairs on the shoulders of the natives. They had passed through many large, handsome, flourishing towns; and on their arrival at Cuzco they had been welcomed with feasts and sports, and had been luxuriously lodged in a splendid palace. They described Cuzco in the most glowing colours. They declared that the walls of the Temple of the Sun were actually plated with massive gold, and that they themselves had taken from it no less than seven hundred golden plates.

These cavaliers, indeed, brought back from Cuzco an immense quantity of gold and silver, which they had taken, despite the feeble resistance of the natives, from the temples and convents. Their story, and the fresh evidences they produced of the incalculable wealth of Peru, only whetted

the cupidity of the Spaniards the more, and made them more than ever eager to complete the conquest of the country.

Just about the time of the return of Hernando and the cavaliers, an event occurred which was destined to have a powerful influence on Pizarro's future career in Peru.

Almagro, Pizarro's friend at Panama, had heard rumours of his earlier successes, and had at last managed to raise a force of a hundred and fifty men. With these he hurriedly set sail from Panama, and after a stormy voyage, in which he and his men were nearly lost, succeeded in reaching the little colony of St. Michael, which, as we have seen, Pizarro had planted. There he heard the thrilling story of the Inca's defeat and capture.

This news filled Almagro with impatience to reach Caxamalca and share Pizarro's splendid fortune. If the truth must be told, Almagro had long suspected that Pizarro did not intend to give him his due portion of the plunder and power of the conquest. He feared that the commander's real purpose was to reap all its fruits for himself; and for this doubt he seems to have had only too good reason.

Pizarro was surprised when one day his old friend marched into Caxamalca at the head of a hundred and fifty foot-soldiers and fifty cavalrymen, the latter having joined him on the way.

Pizarro welcomed Almagro with a most cordial greeting, and was delighted to see his little army increased by so goodly a force of stalwart Spaniards. It was whispered in his ear, indeed, that Almagro had really come, not to aid him, but to compel him to divide his authority and his treasure. But Pizarro paid but little heed to this warning; and establishing Almagro in the best quarters Caxamalca afforded, he began at once to concert with him plans for advancing to Cuzco and taking full possession of Peru.

A most pleasant task remained to be fulfilled before they left Caxamalca. This was to divide up the great mass of

treasure which had been collected as the ransom of the Inca. Several of the buildings in the great square were heaped up and filled with this treasure. It consisted of a great variety of articles of gold and silver. There were not only goblets, basins, vases, table-plate, utensils, the golden slabs that had panelled the walls of the temples, and the heavy golden bars which had formed their cornices, but solid golden fountains, and birds, vegetables, and fruits carved in the precious metal.

In order to divide these dazzling riches, it was necessary to melt them all down into square ingots, or bars; and when this had been done, and the whole had been weighed, it was found that the value of the gold in possession of the Spaniards was about what the stupendous sum of fifteen millions of dollars is at the present time! The silver amounted also to a very considerable sum.

The division of the spoils was then made with the most solemn ceremony. First, a fifth of the whole was deducted and set apart for Pizarro's sovereign, the Emperor Charles the Fifth, which Hernando Pizarro was ordered to carry for him to Spain. Then Pizarro received the principal share, which in itself was a large fortune, besides the massive throne of gold on which Atahualpa had been brought to Caxamalca. Next came Hernando, De Soto, and the other principal cavaliers, whose shares were much less than that of Pizarro, but were nevertheless very large. The rest of the spoil was divided among the cavalry, infantry, and other Spaniards, various sums having been set apart for the Christian church established at Caxamalca, and for the little colony of St. Michael.

Almagro and his soldiers not having taken part thus far in the conquest, did not share equally with the others, but a goodly amount was nevertheless divided among them. The good priest Luque, Pizarro's and Almagro's partner in the expedition, had died at Panama, and his share was therefore absorbed by the others.

The Inca had now fulfilled his promise, and paid his full ransom. He therefore eagerly demanded his liberty. But Pizarro, with many brave and good qualities, was unscrupulous. Though he had solemnly agreed to set Atahualpa free on payment of the ransom, he now refused to do so. His excuse was that it would be dangerous to let the Inca depart, lest he should assemble an army, arouse his empire, and fall upon the Spaniards and destroy them.

A rumour now reached Pizarro's ears, which made him more than ever determined not to release the Inca, and which gave rise to a yet darker project in the conqueror's mind. He learned that the Peruvians were rapidly mustering and preparing to attack him, and that these preparations were being made by the secret orders of the Inca himself. A Peruvian noble, who desired to win Pizarro's friendship, came to him stealthily one night, and said,—

“Atahualpa has sent to Quito and other provinces, with orders to collect troops and march against you and kill you all. The army is now very near this place. It will come at night and attack and set fire to the camp. There are two hundred thousand men in this army, and thirty thousand Caribs besides, who eat human flesh.”

Pizarro at once summoned the captive Inca to his presence; and when Atahualpa, with grave and gloomy countenance, appeared, he exclaimed, “What is this treason you have done to me? I have treated you with honour and indulgence, and have been a brother to you; and you now betray my trust.”

“Why do you laugh at me?” responded the Inca with a disdainful smile. “When you speak to me you are always joking. What am I, and all my people, that we should trouble such valiant men as you are? Do not speak such folly to me.”

Pizarro, however, was by no means convinced of Atahualpa's innocence; besides, he needed some such excuse

as the rumours of an attack afforded to still keep the Inca a close prisoner.

Every precaution was taken to prevent a surprise. Reports kept coming in of a Peruvian rising, and the Spaniards held themselves ready to repel an assault on their camp at an instant's warning. The guard was doubled ; the soldiers slept on their arms ; and De Soto was sent to reconnoitre the country in the direction where the hostile force was supposed to be gathering.

A great clamour now rose in the camp against the poor Inca. The officers and soldiers loudly demanded that he should be put to death, and this demand was warmly seconded by Almagro and the new-comers. At first Pizarro warmly resisted it. He called to mind his solemn promise made to Atahualpa to set him free when the ransom was paid. But he found the camp, with very few exceptions, united against him. The Spaniards swore that the Inca should be killed, even if it were done by stealth. They declared that he was the cause of their present peril, and that so long as he lived there would be no safety.

Pizarro finally found himself compelled to yield to the ferocious clamour of his comrades. He reluctantly consented that the Inca should be tried on the charges of inciting an attack by his subjects upon the Spaniards, and of having caused his brother Huascar to be assassinated.

The trial was a very brief one ; for the cause of the unfortunate Atahualpa was already lost, and his doom sealed. Then came the moment for passing sentence upon him.

The Inca sat on a bench in the square before his relentless judges, Pizarro and Almagro ; while a group of soldiers formed a circle around them. Here and there in the group might have been seen a Peruvian, in the curious dress of his country, looking on eagerly, though he could understand little of what was going forward. The Inca's eyes were cast on the ground. He had quite lost heart, and felt but

too sure what would be his fate ; yet he preserved the same serenity and dignity that he was wont to hold in the midst of his gorgeous court.

Despite the protests of a few of the Spaniards, he was found guilty, and was sentenced, as a heathen, to be burned in the centre of the square.

The sun had gone down, and it was quite dark, when the Inca, chained hand and foot, was slowly led from his quarters to the centre of the square. Once more his face was calm, and his bearing proud and kingly. At this last moment he disdained to show emotion, or to plead again for life and liberty. He stepped as firmly and with as much dignity as if he had been leading a procession to the Temple of the Sun.

The square, lit up by flickering torches which were held by lines of soldiers ranged around it, presented a weird and awe-striking scene.

The Inca reached the fatal stake, to which he was securely bound ; and the fagots were piled around him till they reached his waist.

At this moment the monk Vicente advanced, and urged Atahualpa to renounce idolatry, and become a Christian.

"If you do this," said the monk, "you will not be burned, but will be strangled, and thus die like a Christian."

The Inca hesitated a moment, and then sorrowfully bowed his head as a sign that he consented. The monk hastily performed the ceremony of baptism, and, raising his hands aloft, called upon Heaven to have mercy upon the Inca's soul.

Then a noose was drawn around the Inca's neck, attached to a stick behind. Atahualpa raised his dark eyes to the firmament, and clasped his hands tightly. The stick to which the noose was attached was suddenly twisted, a spasm shot through the noble frame of the Peruvian monarch, and in another instant his head dropped upon his breast.

Atahualpa was no more.

CHAPTER XV.

PIZARRO CAPTURES CUZCO.

THE poor Inca had scarcely been buried when De Soto returned from the expedition which he had undertaken to find out whether there really was a Peruvian army advancing against the Spaniards.

Pizarro then learned, too late, that he had put Atahualpa to death on a false accusation. De Soto had found no army gathered for a hostile purpose. The country was everywhere quiet, and he had met with nothing but friendly welcome wherever he had gone. It was clear that there was no intention of attacking the Spaniards, and that Atahualpa had not instigated any resistance to them.

This news filled Pizarro with shame and regret; but reflecting that he could no longer restore Atahualpa to life, and that, after all, he would always have been dangerous had he been spared, the conqueror tried to drive the dead Inca from his thoughts, and to turn his attention to the task yet before him.

It happened that among the Peruvian prisoners at Caxamalca was a young brother of Atahualpa. His name was Toparca; and he was a mild and gentle person, who easily submitted to the strong will of Pizarro. This prince Pizarro resolved to declare the successor of his brother as Inca of Peru. He thought it wise and prudent that there should be a new Inca, and that he should be under his control. The

true heir to the throne was Manco, who, like Huascar, was a half-brother of Atahualpa ; but Manco was in another part of the empire, and Pizarro knew too little of him to acknowledge him as Inca.

So young Toparca was duly crowned in the great square with the diadem of scarlet fringe, the token of Peruvian sovereignty, which had been snatched from Atahualpa's brow ; and the Peruvians were all brought before him, and required to do him humble homage as their future ruler.

At last the time had arrived to resume the career of conquest which had been so brilliantly begun. Pizarro found that he now had at his disposal a force of not less than five hundred veteran soldiers, of whom one hundred and sixty were cavalry. They were well armed, and used to hardship ; and one and all were eager to push forward in pursuit of the almost limitless wealth which they believed to be gathered in the heart of the land.

Leaving a sufficient garrison to hold Caxamalca, Pizarro set forth upon the broad highway which led directly along the slopes of the Cordilleras to the Peruvian capital. The young Inca Toparca and the aged Peruvian general Callcuchima accompanied the expedition to Cuzco. Pizarro rode on a fiery white charger, in a full suit of armour and with plumed cap, at the head of his army. At a little distance behind came two litters, borne upon the shoulders of sturdy Peruvians, and bearing Toparca and Callcuchima, who were surrounded by a gaily dressed crowd of attendants, as if they were still potentates, instead of being the puppets of Pizarro.

The Spanish army must have looked finely, as the horsemen, with their glistening sabres and helmets, curvetted and caracoled along the broad and even highroad, and as the ranks of the infantry, in brightly polished cuirasses and with their long guns, marched vigorously forward in perfect line : while a confused troop of Peruvians, attached to the force

as guides or servants, walked on either side and brought up the rear.

There was now but little rough climbing by narrow paths over forbidding crags and up well-nigh impassable steeps; for, though much of the way was among the mountains, the great road of the Incas rendered the passage of even the difficult places comparatively easy. The march of the army was mainly across pleasant and smiling valleys, elevated plains that overlooked fairy-like prospects, or by zigzag windings through gorges and over mountain spurs. Sometimes the Spaniards reached heights where they shivered with the cold; but they speedily left them for more genial regions below. At the end of the day's journey they always found themselves at some town where there was ample accommodation and shelter, where they could rest their weary limbs beneath ample roofs, and where there never lacked an abundance of provisions.

Nor did Pizarro for many days perceive any signs of resistance to his triumphant advance. There was wild confusion among the Peruvians, many of whom deserted the villages along his route, carrying their treasure with them, and hiding it away. In other places he was welcomed with the humble submission due to a monarch.

It was after a long tramp that he and his comrades at last came in sight of Xauxa, nestling in its beautiful valley. This was the town which Hernando Pizarro had visited, and near which he had found the old general Callcuchima at the head of thirty-five thousand Peruvians. As the Spaniards advanced towards the town, they for the first time saw a large Peruvian force drawn up in hostile array to oppose them. A rapid river flowed through the valley between Pizarro's force and Xauxa, and it was on the opposite bank of this river that the Peruvian soldiers were posted.

Pizarro, however, never once thought of retreating, or even of pausing, but led his men boldly forward. No bridge

spanned the stream ; so Pizarro, waving to his troops to follow, plunged into the water, and began to swim across. Soon the river was alive with Spaniards buffeting the waves. The Peruvians saw this bold action with dismay ; and after hurriedly discharging a shower of arrows and javelins, which fell for the most part harmless among the Spaniards, they cried out, and scampered away into the woods on the edge of the town as fast as they could run.

Entering Xauxa without further opposition, Pizarro took possession of the temple and some of the larger buildings, where he quartered his troops. He was now far on his way to the goal of his march ; and he resolved to rest awhile at Xauxa, and to establish a garrison there.

Meanwhile the valiant De Soto was once more sent out to reconnoitre the country in advance of them. Taking sixty sturdy cavalrymen armed to the teeth, he proceeded rapidly over the great road, confident of overcoming any resistance he might encounter.

De Soto had not gone far before he was called upon to match Spanish valour against that of the Peruvians. Everywhere he found that the villages had been burned and deserted, the road choked up with trees, the bridges torn down, and the treasure carried off. One day, when he was riding at the head of his horsemen through a narrow craggy pass, he was suddenly surprised by a number of Peruvians, who fell fiercely upon him from every side. For a time it seemed as if the destruction of his whole force was inevitable. They were completely hemmed in, and the arrows and spears fell upon them like rain, maddening the horses and wounding the men. But De Soto did not despair. Crying out to his soldiers to plunge forward, he broke through the dense ranks of the enemy, and safely gained an open plain.

But the danger was not yet over. The Peruvians emerged from the mountain defiles in formidable numbers, and seemed bent on renewing the attack. De Soto lost no time in send-

ing a message to Pizarro, apprising him of his danger ; and happily, before the Peruvians were ready to again assail him, the grateful shades of night fell upon the scene.

Dawn was just breaking when De Soto's party, who had been sleeping soundly despite their danger, heard the clarion-notes of bugles echoing among the hills. They responded by the same means ; and their hearts beat high with joy as they saw Almagro at the head of a large company of cavalry gallop out of the mountains, hastening to their aid.

No sooner did the Peruvians see the increased force of the strangers than they availed themselves of a thick fog which hung over the hills to make their escape.

De Soto and Almagro then leisurely advanced over the plain, ensconced their soldiers in a good defensive position, and sent word to Pizarro that they would wait for him where they were.

Pizarro was greatly incensed when he heard of the attack made upon De Soto's party. He had hoped to reach Cuzco without resistance ; and he at once suspected the old general Callcuchima, who was still with him, of having secretly instigated the assault upon De Soto.

Ordering Callcuchima before him, he sternly charged him with this, and added,—

“If you do not cause the Peruvians to lay down their arms at once, you shall be burned alive.”

The aged chief sullenly replied that he was innocent of the charge ; but Pizarro put him under a strong guard.

A new misfortune now occurred. The young Inca, Toparca, suddenly died. Pizarro was thus deprived of the authority over the Peruvians which he hoped to exercise through this royal puppet.

On setting out from Xauxa, he left his treasure in that town, and a garrison of forty soldiers to guard it, and to hold the place against the hostile Peruvians. After a brief march the main body rejoined De Soto, whom they found perfectly safe where he had posted himself.

Pizarro now thought it prudent to get rid of the old chief Callcuchima. He brought him to trial, and after a hasty hearing condemned him to be burned alive. A friar named Valverde then attempted to convert the condemned man to Christianity ; but the veteran quietly shook his head, saying, "I do not understand the religion of the white men."

He was then led out and tied to the fatal stake. No appearance of emotion altered his wrinkled features. He was calm and silent ; and as the flames glided up and enveloped his venerable form, he cast his eyes heavenward, as if appealing to the sun, which shone brightly down, to reward him for his sufferings with heavenly joys.

Thus was the career of Pizarro stained with one more act of barbarous cruelty. Not long after Callcuchima's execution, a brilliant array of Peruvians was seen approaching the Spanish camp. As they came nearer, it was evident that they were persons of high rank. They were attired in fine cloths, and gold and jewels glittered on their persons. There was no sign, moreover, that they were advancing with a hostile intention.

Pizarro, with several of his officers, went promptly forward to meet them. A fine-looking young man, with large, dark eyes, more richly dressed than the others, stepped out of the group, and, bowing to Pizarro, addressed him.

"I am Manco," said he, "the brother of the murdered Huascar, and the true Inca of Peru. I come to you not as an enemy, but as a friend, to seek your aid and protection in my attempt to regain my rightful throne."

"You are right welcome," returned Pizarro heartily, rejoiced to find once more an Inca in his power. "Go with us, and you shall obtain your royal rights."

The young prince and his attendants at once joined the train of the Spaniards, and together they marched rapidly forward towards Cuzco. The greater part of the way had now been traversed ; and one afternoon Pizarro, riding at the

head of his little army, came suddenly by a turn in the road in full sight of the noble capital of the Incas. At last the goal of his weary journey was before him. It only remained to enter and take possession of the ancient and beautiful city founded by the Children of the Sun.

It was so near dark that Pizarro thought it wise to defer his entrance into Cuzco until morning. His troops therefore bivouacked in a field a mile or more from the city. There seemed little reason to fear an attack during the dark hours. There were no vestiges of a hostile preparation ; the people round about seeming dazed and wonder-stricken, rather than incensed, by the arrival of the Spaniards. A strict guard was kept, nevertheless, throughout the camp ; while the soldiers, full of high spirits and eager expectation, slumbered soundly on their arms.

The sun had just risen, bright and glorious, over the city devoted to his worship, when the army of adventurers was formed in disciplined order to enter its gates. Pizarro divided his forces in three bodies, the cavalry under De Soto forming the van. The centre division was led by the commander himself, and the rear by one of his brothers. In this order the command was given to march ; and the troops, their armour glistening in the sunlight, their plumes waving in the fresh morning air, their banners flying and flapping, and their trumpets sounding clear, loud blasts among the hills, advanced with sturdy step into the streets of Cuzco.

The streets were crowded with an immense crowd of Peruvians, attired in the most brilliant variety of colour ; their curious head-gear, indicating the province from which each came, especially attracting the attention of the Spaniards. The multitude seemed dazed at the appearance of the strangers, but not at all disposed to resent their entrance. The young prince Manco was carried at Pizarro's side on a litter, and as he passed he was greeted with the shouts of the people, who hailed him as their sovereign.

Pizarro marched directly to the great public square in the centre of the city. On the way the Spaniards were exceedingly struck by the noble edifices, the towers and temples, the palaces and vast private residences, the well-built streets crossing each other at right angles, the blooming gardens, the brightly painted walls, the sparkling river which ran directly through the city, spanned by handsome stone bridges, and, looming on a crag high above the houses, the frowning fortress of the Incas.

The square itself was surrounded by a number of low buildings, and by several palaces. In these Pizarro lodged his officers ; while the troops encamped in their tents in the broad open space, which they found to be neatly paved with small pebbles.

Pizarro lost no time in taking full possession of Cuzco, and surmounting the fortress, the palaces, and the great Temple of the Sun with the royal banner of Spain. His occupation of this great city had been achieved without the shedding of a drop of blood ; and as the days passed he found no obstacle in the hostility of the natives.

The soldiers were eager to discover and seize the enormous treasures which, as they rightly guessed, were gathered in the capital. Pizarro forbade them to invade the private dwellings of the people ; but they freely entered the temples and palaces, without scruple tore down the golden plates and ornaments that glittered on the walls, and (to their shame be it said), in their greed for gold, invaded the tombs of the dead, and robbed the corpses of their adornments. Hid away in caverns and stored in the public magazines, they found a bewildering mass of golden vases and other utensils, fine cloths, golden sandals, and a superabundance of grain and other food.

All the treasure thus found was brought into the square, melted down, and divided, as before, proportionately among the officers and men ; and when this had been done, the

humblest and most obscure Spaniard among them might count himself a rich man. The soldiers found themselves so rich, indeed, that they began to gamble furiously ; and many a soldier thus played away in a week the fortune he had won by long hardship and suffering, and found himself a beggar again.

One of the first things that Pizarro did, after gaining full possession of Cuzco, was to cause the young prince Manco to be crowned with all state and pageantry as Inca of Peru.

All the ancient ceremonies attending the coronation of an Inca were scrupulously performed. Manco's brow was encircled with the "borla" or red fringe ; his nobles and soldiers paid him the wonted homage ; his accession was loudly proclaimed by the royal heralds ; and Manco and his real master Pizarro pledged each other's health in brimming golden goblets of Peruvian wine. Meanwhile the light-hearted people of Cuzco feasted, sang, and danced as of old, forgetting that they were thus celebrating the conquest and servitude of their native land.

Pizarro's energies were indefatigable. No sooner did he thus find himself in full and undisputed possession of Cuzco than he began to establish himself and his comrades as the rulers of Peru. He set up a new government in Cuzco, of which two of his brothers were members. He retained a show of the ancient customs and institutions of the empire ; but he secured the real power for the Spaniards. He took for himself the title of "governor ;" and feeling that much of his power over his soldiers was due to their religious enthusiasm, and that the belief that it was a pious work to convert the heathen even by force of arms had done much to achieve the conquest, he caused a cathedral to be built upon the public square, and turned the "House of the Virgins of the Sun" into a Catholic nunnery.

It was while he was thus engaged in transforming Cuzco into a Spanish city that he heard rumours of the approach

of a hostile force of Peruvians, under the command of Quizquiz, one of Atahualpa's ablest generals.

He at once despatched Almagro with some cavalry and the young Inca Manco with some native troops to oppose him. Almagro surprised Quizquiz in his camp. The encounter was short and sharp. Quizquiz retreated hastily to Xauxa, whither he was pursued by Almagro. The Peruvian was there so utterly defeated that his soldiers, enraged at his failure, killed him with their own hands. Almagro and the Inca then returned in triumph to Cuzco.

But meanwhile Pizarro heard of a far more formidable attempt to contest his newly-obtained power. His conquest, though so magnificent and seemingly so complete, was destined to be perpetually disturbed by turmoil and conflict. Henceforth the conqueror was to know no rest except in the grave. The news which he had received might well alarm him ; for he would now probably have to contend, not with hordes of semi-civilized Peruvians, but with hardy and disciplined troops of his own countrymen.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CITY OF THE KINGS.

PEDRO DE ALVARADO was a cavalier of renown, who had been one of the lieutenants of Cortez in his conquest of Mexico, and had distinguished himself by many deeds of daring and valour. At the time of Pizarro's conquest he was governor of Guatemala, in Central America. It was with glistening eyes and beating heart that this Alvarado heard the stories of Pizarro's fortune, of the fabulous wealth he had found and seized, and of the ease with which, once across the Cordilleras, he had completed the conquest of the Peruvians.

These stories fired Alvarado's ambition and lust of gold. He hastened to recruit a force of five hundred men, got together a fleet of twelve large ships, and embarked for the southern coast. He knew that Pizarro had royal authority to take possession of Peru ; but he pretended to think that this authority did not give Pizarro the right to conquer the northern kingdom of Quito. This he proposed to conquer himself.

Alvarado and his forces landed at the Bay of Caraquez, and at once took their march across the mountains. And now they began to suffer the same miseries which Pizarro and his men had undergone. The intense cold froze them ; their provisions gave out, and many of them died of hunger by the dreary roadside ; and they were suffocated by the

ashes and cinders vomited up by the volcanoes near which they passed.

When the Spanish chief emerged into a milder climate, he found that he had but a fourth of his once valiant little army left. He had managed to persuade a large body of natives to follow his fortunes: of these, too, many had perished in the snowy passes; while only a few of his horses had survived the terrible journey.

It was soon after Alvarado had thus with great difficulty crossed the Cordilleras that Pizarro learned of his approach. No time was to be lost. It was clear that Alvarado had come for no friendly purpose. He must be met and repulsed without delay. So Almagro, in whose military skill Pizarro greatly trusted, set out at once with a small force, and directed his way rapidly to the little colony of St. Michael, where he expected that additional troops would join him in his expedition against Alvarado.

On reaching St. Michael, however, Almagro was extremely surprised and enraged to hear that Benalcazar, the cavalier whom Pizarro had left in command of the colony, had gone off on an expedition on his own account. Almagro was now in a sad dilemma. The few men he had brought with him comprised too feeble a force with which to contend with the presumptuous Alvarado. But the intrepid little Almagro was not easily discouraged by an unforeseen obstacle. Though now growing old, he was still full of pluck and vigour. He set out promptly in the direction whither Benalcazar had gone, and, after a long march, found him at last with his troops at a town called Riobamba, which Benalcazar had attacked and taken in the hope of seizing some golden treasure for himself. Benalcazar had no thought of resisting Almagro, and, joining their forces on some table-lands near Riobamba which lay directly in Alvarado's path, they awaited his coming.

It was not long before Alvarado and his soldiers made

their appearance. Both armies were drawn up, and confronted each other in battle array. But before the conflict began, the two chiefs thought it wise to meet and attempt a reconciliation. While Almagro was talking with Alvarado in his tent, the soldiers on both sides mingled freely together ; and Alvarado's followers, dazzled by the stories told by the others, were eager rather to go with them to Cuzco as friends, and share their good luck, than to fight them as foes.

Alvarado, too, was persuaded that it was not for his interest to defy Pizarro. Almagro offered him a sum of money, that was in itself a large fortune, if he would give up his enterprise and make over to Pizarro his ships, stores, and troops. The invader at last accepted the offer. The two little armies joined ranks and marched southward together in the friendliest manner possible.

Pizarro had meanwhile left Cuzco with a considerable force, and, taking the young Inca with him, had marched to the sea-coast to defend it from Alvarado's ships. To his brother Juan he confided the rule of the capital during his absence. On reaching Pachacamac, he learned with joy that Alvarado had yielded to Almagro, and he sent to Alvarado to come and visit him. Ere long the expedition arrived at Pachacamac. The two cavaliers heartily embraced each other, and Pizarro ordered a brilliant series of festivities to be prepared in honour of their reconciliation. There were great banquets and brave tournaments, and the rejoicings continued for many days. Then Alvarado, full of friendship for Pizarro, departed for Guatemala, there to live luxuriously on his newly gotten wealth.

All seemed once more fair before Pizarro. The Peruvians still remained submissive to him ; the young Inca was his obedient puppet ; no storm seemed to be brewing for him in any part of the horizon. He now had leisure to turn his thoughts to a project he had conceived from the time he had

first reached Cuzco. This was to transfer the capital from that city to some site nearer the sea-coast. Cuzco, hemmed in among the mountains, was too remote and difficult of access. Pizarro needed a capital easily to be approached, and capable of nourishing the commerce which he hoped to build up between Peru and Panama.

The spot which he chose for the new city was in the lovely valley of the river Rimac, about twenty-five miles from its mouth. Here, on one bank of the picturesque stream, whence the lower spurs of the Cordilleras could be seen on the north and east, amid a soft, even, and temperate climate, refreshed by gentle south-west breezes from the Pacific, and cooler currents from the snowy mountain crests, Pizarro founded, in January 1535, what he named as "The City of the Kings;" but we now know it as Lima, still the most beautiful city on the Pacific coast of South America. An army of Spanish soldiers and Peruvian artisans was set to work laying the foundations and building up the new capital. The whole country round about was alive with the busy labour of the builders. Streets crossing each other at right angles, wide and straight, quickly grew up on the sunny plain; a noble public square was laid out, on the sides of which rose a lofty cathedral, a palace for Pizarro himself, and many other public edifices. The city was surrounded by a massive wall, twelve feet high and ten thick, made of dried clay, to resist not only hostile attacks, but the throes of earthquakes; and a bridge of five arches, with seats on the piers for the people to sit upon, spanned the Rimac.

Pizarro remained on the spot to overlook the building of his new capital. He went every day through the fast-growing streets, inspected the ramparts and buildings as they rose higher and higher, and always had a pleasant and encouraging word for the groups of workmen as they toiled.

Meanwhile he was puzzled to know what to do with his friend Almagro. He knew well that he had agreed to share his conquest with that valiant little cavalier, and that he had not by any means done him justice. So he sent Almagro back to Cuzco, and gave him authority to fit out an expedition, and to invade the regions south of the Peruvian capital, assuring him that whatever conquests he should make in that direction should be secured to him.

Almagro accordingly hastened to Cuzco, where he assumed command until Pizarro should return, and until his own plans for further conquest should be ripe for execution.

After dividing the treasure taken from Atahualpa's camp at Caxamalca, Pizarro had sent his brother Hernando, with the fifth of it due to the Emperor Charles the Fifth, back to Spain. Hernando was received at home with the utmost cordiality. The emperor welcomed him with great honour, was delighted to receive so much gold, and listened with admiration to his tale; and when he had finished, the monarch conferred on Pizarro the governorship of Peru, granted him power to make conquests two hundred miles further southward, and created Hernando himself a knight and an officer of his royal court.

The emperor's favours did not stop here. He further gave Hernando leave to raise and equip a new force, and ordered his officers to aid him in this task. Besides these favours to the Pizarros, the emperor granted to Almagro the right to make conquests for six hundred miles south of Pizarro's government. The gold that Hernando had brought, and the thrilling stories he told of the riches of Peru, caused a great excitement in Spain, and large numbers eagerly flocked to his standard. Hernando put to sea with his new armament, and after a very tempestuous voyage reached Nombre de Dios. There terrible privations and sufferings awaited his company. They found no food on their arrival; and before food could reach them, large numbers died of actual

starvation. Many of them returned to Spain ; others struggled on, and finally reached Peru ; and among the latter was a friend of Almagro, who carried him the tidings of the grant which the emperor had made to him.

Almagro, though he had professed the strongest friendship for Pizarro ever since his arrival at Caxamalca, really felt aggrieved that Pizarro, instead of dividing equally with him the territory and riches of Peru, took the lion's share of both. His disappointment and anger at this bad treatment had all along rankled in his breast. When, therefore, he learned that the emperor had given him the right to conquer and govern the country south of that ruled by Pizarro, he resolved to show his temper and independence. Being now in command at Cuzco, he claimed that that city itself lay within the territory conceded to him by the emperor ; and this brought about a bitter quarrel between him and Pizarro's two brothers, Juan and Gonzalo, who were at Cuzco, and who had commanded the city until Almagro's arrival.

Pizarro heard of Almagro's new pretensions with great alarm. He sent to his brothers in all haste, and told them to resume their command of the city ; and learning that the dispute became more fierce every day, he soon followed his messenger, and himself hurried to Cuzco.

The governor was received with joy both by his brothers and by the natives. He treated Almagro with all the warmth of an old friend, and by his persuasive words and manner soon succeeded in patching up the quarrel. Once more Almagro yielded to the wishes of his old comrade. Pizarro prevailed on him to abandon, or at least postpone, his claim to Cuzco, and told him that he would aid him in raising an expedition to invade the southern country ; and ere many weeks had passed, Pizarro was relieved to see his rival march away at the head of a considerable force, leaving him to enjoy his power in Peru without molestation.

Pizarro, having set matters to rights at Cuzco, returned

eagerly to the coast to watch the building of the City of the Kings. He delighted in this change from the din and turmoil of war to the more quiet task of founding cities and making ready for the peaceful commerce which he hoped to establish. After all his wanderings, the trials of his marches, and the fierce excitements of his conquest, he welcomed the repose and gentler cares which now absorbed him. Not only did he found and build Lima, but several other cities and towns along the coast, one of which he named Truxillo, after his native place, and which is to-day a flourishing sea-port. He was suddenly startled from these pleasant occupations by an event which, almost without warning, threatened all that he had with so much difficulty, valour, and bloodshed won.

The young Inca Manco, whom Pizarro had left at Cuzco under the care of his two brothers, had up to this time submitted patiently to the conqueror's superior power. He had quietly consented to serve him while appearing to enjoy the dignity and authority of his royal ancestors. But Manco was really a proud and courageous youth. In secret he repined at his abject condition. He mourned the humiliation and oppression of his mild and thrifty people. He rebelled at heart against the arrogant despotism of the stranger. He could not see without rage and horror the temples desecrated, the palaces pillaged, and the riches of his country carried away by the cargo to a foreign land. During Pizarro's absence on the coast, Manco formed the bold resolution to escape from his Spanish masters, to summon the down-trodden Peruvians to his standard, and to lead them himself against the oppressors. For some time he sent secret messages to the chiefs in different parts of the empire, with whom he planned a great revolt. When this plan was ripe Manco made ready to fly from Cuzco.

One night he disguised himself as a peasant, and at a

favourable moment slipped out of the palace, and made his way rapidly through by-streets into the suburbs. This he was able to do the more easily as Juan and Gonzalo Pizarro, his guardians, had grown careless in watching him, and were busy looking after the plunder they were constantly collecting in the city.

Manco, with one or two faithful attendants, hastened to a thicket of low brush two or three miles from Cuzco, where he intended to remain concealed until his chiefs could join him. He had scarcely reached this shelter, however, when the galloping of horses was heard; and before the young Inca could conceal himself, Juan Pizarro rode into the brush, followed by several horsemen, and arrested him.

It appears that certain Peruvians who were hostile to Manco had suspected his design and had watched him; and no sooner had he escaped than they ran and told Juan.

Manco was at once taken to the great fortress overlooking the city, where he was imprisoned under a strong guard.

It was at this moment that Hernando Pizarro, that brother of the conqueror who had been to Spain with the emperor's share of the treasure, returned to Peru. After visiting the governor at the City of the Kings, he repaired to Cuzco, of which he took command.

Hernando, though by nature a stern, headstrong, cruel man towards his own soldiers, was the most gentle of all the Spaniards in his treatment of the Peruvians. He alone had succeeded in winning the friendship of poor Atahualpa, and had bitterly opposed that Inca's execution. On his return to Cuzco, he took the same care to cultivate the good-will of the captive Manco. He ordered the strictness of his confinement to be relaxed, and sent him the choicest viands that Cuzco afforded. Then he released him from imprisonment altogether, and made a companion of him. Manco, with great craft, took advantage of Hernando's leniency.

He still dreamed of liberty, and of delivering Peru from the invader.

One day the Inca said to Hernando,—

“Sir, I know of some secret caves where an immense amount of treasure is hidden. They are among yonder mountains; and if you will send me thither with a small escort, I will speedily bring all this treasure to you.”

Hernando’s insatiable love of gold disarmed his usual caution. Forgetting the Inca’s previous escape, he let him go as he proposed, sending two Spaniards with him. Once more Manco found himself free; nor did he hesitate to avail himself of the opportunity. Ten days elapsed, and Hernando still awaited in vain his return with the promised treasure. Then Hernando became alarmed, and sent out his brother Juan at the head of sixty horsemen in search of the royal fugitive.

Juan rode at full gallop out upon the highroad, directing his way straight towards the mountains. He had not gone more than six or eight miles when he met the two Spaniards who had accompanied Manco returning in all haste to the city.

“Captain,” they cried, “go no farther. The Peruvians have risen by thousands, and are preparing to march on Cuzco. The mountains are swarming with warriors. From every direction they are flocking to the Inca’s standard. He is in their midst, and will lead them against us.”

Despite this startling news, Juan resolved to advance some distance farther. On reaching a river, he saw on the opposite bank a great number of Peruvian troops. With all the rashness and fire of a Pizarro, he plunged his horse into the stream, and his comrades promptly followed him. Climbing the opposite bank, they set fiercely upon the Peruvians, and after a hot fight succeeded in driving them back among the hills. Juan then encamped upon the plain.

The next morning a sight which might well fill him with

dismay greeted his eyes. Looking towards the mountains, he saw the defiles swarming with dense masses of Peruvian warriors, and presently he was assailed by clouds of javelins and arrows. He fought bravely all day, and succeeded in keeping his innumerable foes at bay; but, perceiving that the Peruvian host was constantly increasing, he at last gave up in despair, recrossed the river, and retreated in all haste upon Cuzco. At this juncture he received an urgent message from Hernando, urging him to return without delay, and apprising him that Cuzco was already besieged by an immense army of Peruvians.

As he approached the city, he saw that this was but too true. It seemed to be completely surrounded by the vast throng of besiegers. But he dashed forward, and, scattering the Peruvians right and left, succeeded in entering Cuzco without accident.

A terrible danger now hung over the Spaniards; and their valiant chief was far away on the sea-coast, as yet in happy ignorance of the threatened ruin of his conquest.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SIEGE OF CUZCO.

AS the next morning dawned, and the brothers looked from their watch-towers, the city seemed enveloped, as far as eye could reach, by a mighty multitude of Peruvian braves. The plains, valleys, and hill-tops seemed covered with them; while the wild warlike music that resounded from their camps, and the fierce cries that every now and then arose among them, could not but make even the valiant Spaniards shudder.

Hernando had a force of only two hundred men, including both cavalry and infantry, and a thousand Peruvians, who, though devoted to the conquerors, could be of but little use in an encounter with such an army as was gathered around the city. To attack the besiegers was useless; he could only wait until succour came from outside.

But it soon became apparent that the enraged besiegers did not intend to wait to starve out the Spaniards. They attacked the city from every side with intense ferocity. Showers of arrows, stones, and spears rained upon every street and building. But this was not the worst. The assailants shot into the midst of the city burning arrows and red-hot stones, and ere long many of the buildings were in flames. The Spaniards could make no effort to stop the conflagration. Happily they were encamped in the open square, where they were protected from the flames, and

escaped being burned alive ; but in a few hours Cuzco blazed, little better than a lurid ruin, all around them. The flames raged and leaped from tower to tower, from street to street. Lofty edifices fell with a deafening crash ; and when at last the fire had devoured all it could reach, scarcely a public building, except the great Temple of the Sun and the Convent of the Virgins, remained.

Made desperate by this disaster, and by the terrific storm of missiles that never ceased to fall, Hernando led his gallant band again and again beyond the walls, and frantically attacked the besiegers. But each time that they sallied forth they were driven back with thinned ranks ; and at last they were forced to abandon all hope of driving their countless assailants away.

The Peruvians now stormed the fortress that rose above the city, and, after a desperate conflict with a handful of Spaniards, succeeded in capturing it. This disaster made the hearts of the Spanish soldiers sink with discouragement. They begged their leaders to abandon Cuzco, to break at all hazards through the dense ranks of the enemy, and so escape to the sea-coast. But Hernando Pizarro was made of sterner stuff. He would not yield up a city it had cost so much to take, and he animated his faltering colleagues anew by his stout and unyielding spirit.

To retake the great fortress was now an absolute necessity. It seemed an impossible task, for the ramparts rose on a steep crag on the side of Cuzco, and could only be reached by storming it in the rear. But Hernando resolved that the attempt should be made, and to his heroic brother Juan he committed the dangerous duty of making it.

Juan set out about sunset with a picked body of cavalry. Deceiving the enemy by the direction in which he sallied from the city, he suddenly turned, rapidly marched to the rear of the fortress, and fearlessly assailed it. The conflict was long, desperate, and bloody. The brave Juan always

appeared at the head of his men, wielding his sword with the strength of a giant, and dealing deadly havoc among the foe. The parapet was taken, and Juan, springing upon it, shouted to his men to follow. At this moment a large stone, hurled at him with enormous force, struck him on the head. He fell with a groan, but soon rose on his knees, and continued to urge his men forward. The blow was a fatal one. Juan was taken back to Cuzco, and, after lingering some days, died in his brother's arms.

After a most heroic and protracted contest, the great fortress was taken. But the Spaniards were still in a desperate position. Weeks had passed, and no succour came. They heard with a shudder that the whole country had risen; that Pizarro, instead of being able to come to their relief, was himself in danger; and that reinforcements were constantly being added to the besieging army. To add to the horror of their position, food began to fail them. The provisions in the city had been largely consumed by the fire, and it was rarely that they could, by making excursions outside the walls, capture enough food to last them a day. There seemed nothing before them but death, either by starvation, or, what was as bad, by the savage and avenging hands of the people they had conquered.

Meanwhile Pizarro, on the sea-coast, was attacked by another Peruvian force. Luckily he had with him a small but intrepid company of cavalry, and as soon as the foe appeared on the plain through which the river Rimac runs, he ordered the cavalry to sally out upon them. The attack was short and sharp, and resulted in a complete rout of the Peruvians. But Pizarro soon learned the terrible news from Cuzco; and, although he had escaped danger himself, he became very much alarmed for its safety. Collecting all the men he could spare, he sent them forward to relieve, if possible, the Peruvian capital. But one and all of these expeditions failed to reach the besieged city. They went forth only to meet with

a tragic fate. One by one they were hemmed in and cut off by the now infuriated Peruvians, who gave them no quarter, but slaughtered them without mercy. The few who escaped from these marches brought back harrowing tales of the massacre of their comrades. At last Pizarro found he could send no more troops away without leaving his new and fair City of the Kings to certain destruction.

He was at his wits' end to know what to do. The whole fruit of his victories seemed about to be snatched from him. It appeared doubtful, indeed, whether any Spaniard would escape alive from Peru. The soldiers he still had with him clamoured to return to Panama ; which was yet possible, for several ships rode at anchor at the mouth of the Rimac. But Pizarro's stout soul was not subdued even by the disasters and perils which surrounded him on every hand. Instead of using the ships to retreat from his hard-won conquest, he sent them back to Panama and Guatemala with the most earnest appeals to the governors of those places for aid. He begged them to despatch troops, and save the wealth, power, and honour of the Spanish dominion in Peru ; and promised Alvarado, who had come as his enemy and returned his friend, to share all the conquests they might thenceforth make together.

While Pizarro was making these frantic efforts to restore his imperilled fortunes, the devoted garrison of Cuzco held out manfully. They bore their privations like heroes, and neglected no opportunity, miserable as was their situation, to deal a blow at their besiegers. By their obstinacy they finally wore out the Inca and his army. After Cuzco had been beleaguered for five months, Manco, finding it difficult to feed so enormous a body of troops, and anxious that the fields should be sown, sent home large numbers of his soldiers, while he remained before Cuzco with the rest.

The Spaniards at once availed themselves of this relaxation of the enemy's hold. They sallied in bold bands out of

the city, scoured the country around, gathered grain and other provisions, and returned laden with these welcome stores to their quarters. They attacked the Peruvians again and again, ruthlessly riding them down with their horses, mowing them down with their guns, and sweeping them down with their sharp Toledo sabres.

Hernando now resolved to attempt the recapture of the young Inca Manco. It was a rash project: for Manco's quarters were in a lofty fortress, perched upon an almost inaccessible cliff, and he was perpetually surrounded by the bravest legions of his army. Hernando, however, was not easily dismayed. He chose eighty of his hardiest and bravest cavalry, and one night sallied forth, crossed the river, and at early dawn climbed the steep towards the fortress. No sooner did the Peruvians espy him than they hurled down upon him a perfect tempest of stones and arrows. The Spaniards held their ground desperately for awhile; but the numbers of the enemy were too great, and their resistance was too hot, to allow Hernando to approach the ramparts, and he was forced to retreat. He succeeded in reaching Cuzco safely, but not until he had lost a large part of his valiant cavalry.

While the Spaniards were thus engaged in heroically battling against one peril—the uprising of the Peruvians—another and greater peril menaced them from a distance. They had not overcome the fierce assaults of the Inca's subjects before they were called upon to resist a more formidable attack from their own countrymen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ALMAGRO'S REVOLT.

ALMAGRO, when the Peruvians thus attacked the Spaniards at Cuzco, was far on his way southward with his stalwart band of adventurers. The plucky little cavalier, though now nearly seventy years old, and enfeebled by disease as well as age, was resolved, if possible, to make a conquest as rich as that of Pizarro; and he pushed bravely on, in the hope of finding in the south another golden land like Peru.

His hopes, however, were destined to be frustrated. For awhile he and his men advanced cheerily along the great highway that led from Cuzco to the southern limits of the Inca's empire; but as soon as they left it, and entangled themselves in the rude and savage mountain passes, their progress was slow and painful.

It was not long before they began to endure terrible sufferings. It grew so bitterly cold that their fingers and toes froze, and dropped off. In those dreary and desolate wilds they could find no food; and the poor fellows were at last reduced to feed upon the corpses of their horses, while the Peruvians who were with them devoured their comrades who fell dead from hunger or cold by the wayside. Everywhere they went, they found that the natives had burned their huts and provisions, and had fled from the pathway of the stranger.

The few Peruvians that Almagro succeeded in capturing he subjected to the most ferocious cruelties. He forced them to carry his ammunition and clothing, and when they resisted he caused them to be burned alive.

After going a distance of three hundred miles, and failing to find any of the treasure he hoped to obtain, Almagro was forced to turn back, and march northward again. His expedition was a sad failure, and the only desire of his suffering soldiers was to get back safely to Peru. In returning they were forced to cross a dreary desert; but the prospect of once more reaching a land of riches and plenty buoyed them up, and they pushed rapidly forward towards Cuzco.

When Almagro had come within about a hundred and fifty miles of that city, he heard news of the Peruvian rising and of the siege of Cuzco. It at once occurred to him that he might take advantage of this state of things. He had by no means given up his claim to Cuzco; and now, more than ever, when he had failed to conquer a new country for himself, was he resolved to possess the capital of Peru, and become its ruler. He therefore hastened forward; and his soldiers, who were warmly devoted to him, eagerly hailed this prospect of the stirring action of conflict again.

When Almagro came near the Inca's camp, he sent to Manco, and asked for an interview with him. The young Inca received Almagro in his camp, and pretended to welcome him as a friend; but no sooner had the Spanish chief departed than the Peruvians prepared to resist him.

Manco marched against him with no less a force than fifteen thousand warriors. But the doughty Almagro was prepared for him. After a sharp battle, the Peruvians were repulsed and routed.

Almagro now resolved to lose no time in attacking Hernando Pizarro at Cuzco. Advancing with his brave little army upon the city, he availed himself of a dark, tempestuous night to storm it. He found but little opposition. The

force under Hernando had greatly dwindled during the long siege, and Almagro took possession of the great square almost without the shedding of a drop of blood.

Among his officers was a very brave and energetic cavalier, who was faithfully devoted to Almagro's cause. The name of this cavalier was Orgonez.

Orgonez no sooner found himself in Cuzco, than, choosing a band of tried soldiers, he hastened to the palace where Hernando Pizarro and his brother Gonzalo had their quarters. Both Almagro and Orgonez heartily hated Hernando, whose haughty bearing and domineering temper had often deeply offended them. Orgonez attacked the palace furiously; but Hernando was defended by a gallant company of about twenty men, who desperately resisted the attack.

At last Orgonez, finding that he could not take the palace, ordered his soldiers to set fire to it. Presently it began to blaze up. It was no longer possible for those inside to remain; and Hernando and his followers rushed out, and were at once seized by their assailants. Hernando himself had scarcely emerged from the door when the whole roof of the great building fell in with a deafening roar.

Although Almagro was at last master of Cuzco, he was in great peril of losing it again; for at Xauxa, forty miles away, was encamped a body of five hundred Spaniards, under a general named Alonzo de Alvarado, which had been sent by Pizarro from Lima for the succour of his brothers.

Almagro saw that he must lose no time in attacking Alvarado. The latter had his camp on the banks of a river, opposite a bridge. At some distance farther down was a ford, where he had also taken pains to leave a guard. It happened that among his officers was one named Lerma, who was secretly a friend of Almagro. To this treacherous man Alvarado owed the misfortune which soon overtook him.

Almagro, leaving a garrison at Cuzco, issued forth with

the rest of his troops to assail Alvarado, and Orgonez went with him. On approaching the river, he received a message from Lerma, who apprised him of the ford lower down the river, and advised him to pretend to attack the bridge, but to really lead his main force to the ford, and cross there.

No time was lost in following out this plan. Almagro advanced upon the bridge, as if about to attack it; but as soon as night fell, he sent the greater part of his force down to the ford under Orgonez, while he himself remained at the bridge with the rest.

Orgonez quickly led his men into the shallow water, and, after a sharp fight with those who were guarding the ford, (in the course of which he himself was severely wounded in the mouth), succeeded in getting a footing on the opposite shore. Alvarado soon learned what was going on, and hastened down the bank, too late, to defend the passage of the ford. Then Almagro, seizing his chance, forced his way across the bridge, fell upon Alvarado in the rear, and, after a brief though desperate encounter, defeated him, and took a large number of his soldiers prisoners.

All this while Pizarro remained at Lima, the "City of the Kings," impatiently awaiting the aid he had summoned from Panama and Guatemala.

After living in this distressing suspense for several months, which seemed an age to him, his eyes were delighted with the arrival of some ships, which brought a goodly reinforcement of soldiers, and were, besides, laden with cargoes of provisions, ammunition, and clothing. The soldiers were under the command of a renowned cavalier named Espinosa, who heartily devoted himself to Pizarro's service.

Pizarro hastened to organize another army for the purpose of marching to Cuzco and raising the siege of the Inca. Though he had grown sick of war, and longed to live in peace in his new city, which was now built, and was fast being

filled up by Spanish settlers, his dauntless soul could not rest until he had crushed all opposition to his rule.

He set out at last at the head of about five hundred men, two hundred and thirty of whom were cavalry. But he had scarcely left the valley of the Rimac when the news reached him of Almagro's sudden return, his capture of Cuzco, and his crushing triumph over Alvarado. With the quickness of his military instinct, Pizarro saw that it would not be safe to advance farther, with so small a force as he had, against his victorious rival. So he returned to Lima, and resolved, as the part of prudence, to send an envoy to Almagro, and, if possible, to come to terms with him. He despatched Espinosa to him; but Almagro was flushed and insolent with success, and instead of listening to Pizarro's proposals, put himself at the head of a large force, and marched straight towards Lima. No longer content with Cuzco, the old cavalier's towering ambition now extended to the mastery of all Peru.

Almagro carried Hernando Pizarro, closely guarded, along with him. Orgonez, whose hatred for Hernando knew no bounds, begged the chief to kill him, instead of taking him on the expedition.

"A Pizarro," urged Orgonez, "was never known to forget or forgive an injury; and you will surely rue the day if you let Hernando live."

Hernando's lot since his capture had been a hard one. He had been closely confined in a dungeon, and had been scantily fed. But his jailers allowed him one consolation. Among Almagro's most trusted officers was a certain Diego de Alvarado, a brother of the cavalier who some time before had attempted to invade Peru, as has been related. This Alvarado became Hernando's constant companion in prison, and they beguiled the time by gambling. In this bad occupation, Hernando won a large sum of money from Alvarado; but when the latter offered to pay his debt, Hernando re-

fused to take it. This made Alvarado his fast friend, and he was destined to do him afterwards more than one valuable service.

Almagro, with a formidable body of troops, marched rapidly across the country, and soon made his appearance in the lovely valley where Lima, Pizarro's new capital, stood.

Pizarro had no sooner learned Almagro's near approach than he sent a gentle message to him, proposing an interview. To this Almagro consented.

On a balmy afternoon in November, the two Spanish chiefs, once such devoted friends, but now enemies at heart, met on the verdant banks of the Rimac, each surrounded by a picked band of cavaliers. Almagro, as soon as he saw Pizarro, started forward with a smile on his lips, and stretched out both his hands, as if to welcome the governor with all his old cordiality; but Pizarro drew himself up proudly, put his hands behind his back, and made a cold and haughty bow. Then turning upon Almagro with flashing eyes, he exclaimed,—

“Why have you seized my city of Cuzco, and cast my brothers into prison? What means this hostile armament that you have brought hither?”

Almagro replied sharply that Cuzco was his by right, and that he was resolved to defend it. The dispute grew warmer and warmer, until the cavaliers seemed about to come to blows; when Almagro, looking around suspiciously, and fearing that Pizarro's attendants were about to rush upon him, turned on his heel, mounted his horse, and hurried off to his camp.

In spite of this quarrel, the two cavaliers did not at once attack each other. They continued to send messages to and fro, and at last came to terms on the matters in dispute between them. It was agreed that Almagro should keep possession of Cuzco until fresh instructions came from the

emperor ; and that, on the other hand, Hernando Pizarro should be set free.

Almagro hastened to the tent where Hernando was kept under guard, and with a generous impulse grasped him by the hand.

"You are free from this moment," said the old cavalier. "Let us bury all our disputes, and live henceforth as friends."

"Nothing," replied Hernando, delighted to recover his liberty, "would suit me better."

The two then cordially embraced ; and Hernando, mounting a horse which Almagro provided for him, galloped away to his brother's camp. Pizarro greeted him with affectionate warmth, led him into his tent, and regaled him with the best dishes the country afforded.

The next day Pizarro called a council of his principal officers. Dauntless and determined as he was, he had one very grave defect. He was deceitful, and made light of his plighted faith. He had solemnly agreed with Almagro upon the terms of peace between them, and had by this means procured Hernando's freedom. But now he proposed to break his pledges, and to send Almagro word that he did not intend to fulfil his agreement. At first Hernando, who had been so leniently dealt with by Almagro, objected to this ; but his voice was overcome by that of the other cavaliers, who one and all clamoured to march against the other camp.

As soon as Almagro received Pizarro's message that he would not abide by the treaty, he hastened to retreat from the valley, and to get back to Cuzco as quickly as he could. He feared every moment, lest, unprepared as he was, Pizarro should attack him, and he was anxious to reach the capital before his enemy.

Poor Almagro was in a sad plight. He was now not only old, but broken down by a long-lingering and incurable disease. At this critical moment in his fortunes he could

not even walk, and had to be carried on a litter across the arid deserts and over the rugged and dangerous mountain passes.

He succeeded, however, in reaching Cuzco before his enemy, and in all haste prepared to defend himself. It was full time; for he had only been at Cuzco a few days when a formidable array of troops, with armour shining and flags flying, appeared in the dim distance, winding down the mountain defiles towards the city. It was Hernando Pizarro, to whom his brother had committed the command of the army, while he himself remained at Lima.

At first Almagro thought that he would remain with his force inside Cuzco, and defend it from the fortress and ramparts. But his faithful officer Orgonez persuaded him to adopt a different plan. Orgonez proposed to march with the five hundred men at their disposal outside the city, and await Hernando's attack on a plain about three miles off. Almagro himself, sick, feeble, and foreboding disaster, remained in Cuzco, while Orgonez took command of the troops.

The scene was a thrilling one, as with slow, steady, measured tread the serried ranks of Hernando's soldiers advanced down the green slopes, their banners and plumes floating in the air, their trumpets sounding, and their armour glistening in the sunlight. As the sun set, he took up his position on the banks of a small river which separated him from Orgonez's force. Presently the watch-fires, lit up in both camps, showed each where the other was, and cast a fitful and lurid glare over the hills and plain.

By dawn of the next day the trumpets had called Hernando's soldiers to their ranks. His infantry was drawn up in the centre, and his cavalry occupied the flanks. When they had formed in order of battle, two priests walked slowly to the front, arrayed in the robes of their office; two small altars were set up, and the priests chanted the mass, and gave the soldiers a solemn benediction.

Then the order was given to "Forward march!" The little army advanced as if by a single motion. They boldly waded into the stream, and ascended the other side. A wide swamp now lay between them and the enemy; but they marched straight on, unchecked either by the sinking soil or by the volleys of cannon with which Orgonez had begun to welcome them.

In an instant, as it seemed, the two armies came together with a furious rush. On the surrounding hills swarms of Peruvians watched with wonder and delight this deadly onset of Spaniard against Spaniard. The conflict raged with desperation. Both Hernando and Orgonez performed prodigies of valour. At last Orgonez fell to the ground, his horse being shot under him. In a moment he was surrounded by a crowd of his enemies. Raising his head proudly, he asked,—

"Is there a knight here to whom I can surrender?"

A mean-looking soldier stepped forward and held out his hand. Orgonez delivered him his sword. No sooner had he done so than the wretch who received it, drawing a dagger, plunged it into the brave cavalier's heart up to the hilt.

For a moment there was confusion in the ranks of Almagro's soldiers. They had lost their leader. But another, not less valiant, took his place. Lerma put himself at their head, and called aloud to them to follow him into the fray. Enraged at the dastardly deed by which Orgonez had died, Lerma wildly searched over the battle-field for Hernando Pizarro. He thirsted to wreak his vengeance upon him. Hernando, who was as fearless as he, hastened to meet Lerma. They charged full at each other with their lances, and each fell at the shock of the other's weapon. The wounded cavaliers were picked up by their adherents, and the tide of battle swept between them and parted them.

As the conflict raged, Almagro, lying upon a litter, watched its course from a hill near by. He knew that

upon its result hung his fate. If his soldiers prevailed, he would be master of Peru ; if they were routed, it would be utter ruin to him. What was his agony when he heard that his faithful Orgonez had fallen under an assassin's blow ! and what his dismay when, on Hernando's troops charging furiously his defenders, he saw the latter break their ranks and fly bewildered in every direction ! The battle had been decided against him, and there was nothing left for him but to try to save his life. He with difficulty got on the back of a mule, ill as he was, and rode in all haste to the fortress. But he was speedily followed by a band of Hernando's soldiers, rudely seized, put in irons, and brought to the same palace where he had imprisoned Hernando. There he was cast into a dark, damp dungeon.

Hernando entered Cuzco in triumph, and unresisted. Once more he found himself encamped on the great square where he had sustained the siege of the Peruvians, master of the city, and with Almagro as his captive.

The fate of the brave Lerma, who had taken Orgonez's place as the leader of Almagro's troops, deserves to be told. He was carried by his conquerors, pierced by no less than seventeen wounds, from the battle-field into the city. There he was laid in the house of one of his friends. As he was reclining on his bed, smarting and feeble from his wounds, a rough soldier, whom on one occasion he had struck in a moment of anger, entered the apartment. Walking up to Lerma's bedside, and shaking his fist in his face, he cried,—

"Once you struck me a blow. I have come to wash it away with your blood !"

Lerma raised himself on his elbow, and replied that when he was well he would settle the account with the man.

"No !" retorted the wretch ; "I will not wait. Now is the moment for my revenge."

With this he plunged a sword deep into the wounded cavalier's body ; and Lerma, falling back, and throwing up his arms, expired. Five years after, the ruffian was hung for having committed this dastardly outrage.

Hernando was puzzled to know what to do with his captive Almagro. To set him free would be to kindle anew the fires of civil war between the conquerors of Peru ; to keep him in prison was to tempt his adherents to rescue him. Almagro, when he had Hernando in his power, had spared him, in spite of the eager advice of Orgonez to put an end to his life ; and Hernando hesitated to repay this generosity by executing his prisoner.

One day he went to visit Almagro in his dungeon. The gray-haired cavalier lay suffering on a pallet of straw. Disease and privation had reduced him to a mere skeleton.

"Cheer up!" said Hernando. "As soon as my brother the governor comes, you shall be released. You shall be sent whither and how you will."

Almagro was comforted by his captor's words, and still more so when Hernando sent him every day the nicest dishes that graced his own table.

But, despite these promises and attentions, Hernando at last resolved that Almagro must die. The old man was amazed, a few days after Hernando's visit to him, to find himself rudely seized by two soldiers, and dragged out of his dungeon. They told him that he was about to be tried for treason and conspiracy. He could scarcely believe his ears. Nevertheless, he submitted meekly to the rough treatment of the soldiers, and soon made his appearance before his judges.

The trial had already been concluded, and he had been sentenced to death. For a moment the poor old cavalier was unmanned.

"I cannot believe," he cried, "that such an outrage will be committed upon me!"

Restored to his dungeon, he sent to Hernando, imploring him to come and see him. When Hernando appeared, Almagro fell at his feet, and, with tears streaming down his withered cheeks, implored him to spare his life.

"Think," he pleaded, "what friendship there has been between your brother and me! what services I rendered him when he was poor and without authority! Oh, spare my gray hairs as I spared you, and let me live out in peace the brief existence that still remains to me!"

But his enemy was relentless. Glancing coldly at the old man grovelling at his feet, Hernando said with a sneer,—

"I am surprised to see you behave so unlike a brave cavalier. You need have no hope of being spared. Prepare to die. Your doom is sealed, and you had best make ready to meet it."

With these harsh and cruel words Hernando turned on his heel and left him.

Almagro had a son, named Diego, whom he greatly loved—a fair young man of one or two and twenty. To him the old man bequeathed the power he had derived from the emperor, and all his property he left to his sovereign.

The next day after Almagro's unhappy interview with Hernando, the great square was strongly guarded by several companies of infantry with loaded guns. Hernando feared lest Almagro's friends in Cuzco, hearing of his intended fate, should rise and seek to prevent it by force of arms; for there were many of his adherents in the city who detested the Pizarros. At the same time, the houses of these adherents were strictly watched.

Almagro was aroused by two persons entering his dungeon. One was a priest, who carried a book, and slowly approached his bedside. The other was a villainous-looking man, who kept his face concealed, and who carried something—Almagro could not see what—in his hand.

The priest, in a low voice, urged Almagro to think of his

soul, telling him that his hour was come. Then, kneeling beside him, the priest uttered a long and solemn prayer. Rising to his feet, he withdrew to a corner of the prison.

The strange man now came forward, and, without saying a word, bound the miserable old man hand and foot. He fastened the fatal noose around the shrivelled neck, and, leaping behind him, twisted the stick to which the noose was applied. Almagro gasped, quivered, and fell stark and stiff to the ground.

So ended the famous friendship between Almagro and Pizarro. Thus did Pizarro's brother cruelly requite the indispensable aid which Almagro had lent towards the conquest of Peru.

No sooner was the old cavalier dead than his body was brought out into the square and laid on a bier in the centre. A herald in a loud voice announced his end through the streets, and the next day all that remained of the old man was entombed in the new church which the Spaniards had built at Cuzco.

While this bloody deed was being done, Pizarro was on his way from Lima to Cuzco. In due time the news of his old comrade's fate reached him. When he heard it he seemed overcome with emotion. His body shook with agitation, and he retired pale and silent to his tent. For several days his soldiers did not catch a glimpse of his face.

Almagro's son Diego had hastened to Pizarro, and pleaded for his father's life; and Pizarro had told him to fear nothing, for he would protect the old man's gray hairs. The youth, made happy by this promise, had gone on cheerfully to Lima; and there he heard with intense grief that, in spite of all, his father was no more.

CHAPTER XIX.

THRILLING ADVENTURES OF GONZALO.

PIZARRO entered Cuzco with great pomp and magnificence. He had not been in the capital of the Incas since he had captured it; and in the meantime many momentous events had happened there. Now the Peruvians seemed once more crushed and disheartened. Almagro's revolt had been subdued: the old chief lay in his grave. It seemed as if there were now no obstacle in the way of Pizarro's absolute rule over the Inca's empire.

Amid the sounding of trumpets and the flying of banners, at the head of a brilliant array of soldiers, he marched through the streets, which still bore evidence of the great conflagration which had swept through them, to the great square. He was attired in a rich suit of velvet, which Cortez had sent him as a present; he wore a hat from which floated lofty plumes of various colours; on his fingers and breast jewels glittered; and although he was somewhat grizzled, and his face clearly betrayed the lines of care and advancing age, he still looked a valiant and stalwart knight.

His first task was to bring order out of the confusion which still existed at Cuzco, and to establish his government on a firm foundation. Resolved to suppress Almagro's party altogether, he seized their estates and banished their principal chiefs from the city. It was necessary, too, that

he should take measures to retain the good-will of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, for whom he had conquered so vast a territory, and gained so valuable a treasure.

He accordingly ordered that a large quantity of gold and silver should be collected ; and when this was done he despatched his brother Hernando to Spain with it. Hernando set sail for Mexico, crossed that country, and proceeded home with the magnificent gift intended for the sovereign. Before leaving Pizarro he had said to him,—

“Beware of Almagro’s men. I shall not be here to defend you. They are bitterly resolved upon revenge ; and if you do not keep strict watch, they will deal you a foul blow.”

Had Pizarro heeded his brother’s words, so earnestly spoken, he might have escaped the terrible fate which soon overtook him.

Meanwhile the Peruvians, who mourned the desolation and confusion into which their once happy country had been plunged by the Spaniards, began once more to be troublesome. The Inca Manco could not rest easy while his power and capital remained in the hands of the conquerors ; and one day Pizarro was alarmed to hear that he had taken up a position with a large force in the mountains westward from the city.

No time must be lost in frustrating the Inca’s hostile design ; so Pizarro sent out his brother Gonzalo at the head of a large body of troops to oppose him.

Gonzalo was the sole own brother still left with Pizarro in Peru. Juan had been killed in the siege of Cuzco. Hernando was far on his way to Spain with the emperor’s treasure. Alcantara, who remained, was only a half-brother. Gonzalo most of all resembled the conqueror. He was a bold cavalier, a skilful soldier, an admirable horseman, and had a cordial off-hand way with him that endeared him to his followers. He was, besides, the handsomest of all the

Pizarros, and his noble bearing and kindly manner made him a favourite both in court and camp.

But with all his spirit and daring, Gonzalo did not succeed in overcoming or capturing the Inca. Every time he met him in the open field, Manco was routed ; but he fled into the mountain fastnesses, whither Gonzalo could not follow him.

Then Pizarro sent envoys to the Inca to see if he could not make peace with him ; but one of his messengers was murdered by the Peruvians, and Pizarro was forced to abandon his attempt.

During all this time many colonies of Spaniards from Panama and other settled places farther north had been pouring into Peru. The stories of the conquest, of the wealth of the country, the fertility of the tropical fields, the excellent harbours, aroused the ambition and enterprise of hundreds both at the isthmus and in Spain itself ; and large numbers hastened to avail themselves of the opening afforded by Pizarro's rule to go to the new possessions of their sovereign, and establish themselves in the towns and villages both along the coast and in the interior. Many of the settlers married Peruvian women, and these were the ancestors of the "half-breeds" who are still so numerous in Peru.

Pizarro encouraged the new-comers, and heartily welcomed them to Peru. Returning to Lima, his beloved "City of the Kings," he once more devoted himself to the growth of that place, and to the planting of colonies in other parts of the country. Lima had grown in a short time as if by magic. It was now a busy, flourishing town, with many fine buildings, an imposing public square, a noble bridge, spacious quays along the river-side, and regular streets stretching out in every direction, and growing longer and more thickly settled every week. Its inhabitants comprised both Spaniards and native Peruvians, the latter being in most cases the slaves and servants of the former. The

harbour of Callao, but a few miles from Lima, where the river Rimac flowed into the sea, was now gay with its fleets of ships anchored in the roadstead, and with the constant arrivals and departures. Trade was fast growing up between the young colonies and the isthmus. The ships brought provisions, arms, and clothing, and took back cargoes of gold, silver, and precious stones, wool, tropical spices, fruits, and vegetables. Pizarro founded a city called Guamanga, half-way between Cuzco and Lima, fortified it with strong walls, and built it of stone. He also established two other good-sized cities, one of which he called the "City of Silver," and the other "Arequipa," near the coast.

It gladdened the conqueror's heart to see these busy, thriving communities growing up around him. He was now growing old. His hair and beard, once of raven blackness, were grizzled; his swarthy face was lined with wrinkles; but his stalwart frame was as erect and noble in bearing as ever. He had taken as the companion of his later years a beautiful Peruvian girl, a daughter of the very Inca Atahualpa whom he had put to death; and he saw a family of young children growing up around him. Boundless wealth was now his. He lived in a stately palace which he had built for himself on the great square at Lima; and there he lived in pomp and luxury, surrounded by a multitude of guards and attendants, his apartments adorned with brilliant hangings and rich furniture, and his table provided with the daintiest dishes of Peru and the finest wines of Spain. Of his riches he was very lavish. He loved to accumulate gold, not to hoard it, but to spend it generously. He provided festivities for the people, and often displayed a royal pageantry before their eyes.

His power, too, seemed absolute. There were now so many Spaniards in Peru, so many strongly-fortified towns, and such complete armaments, that the natives were overawed; and there seemed to be no danger that the Inca, with

all his hosts, could ever rid his country of the intruders. Pizarro gave laws to the whole empire. The emperor, on hearing of his conquest, had conferred upon him the title of Marquis; and thus the once shabby little runaway of Truxillo took his place among the haughty grandees of Spain, whose families had been of noble rank for centuries.

Pizarro enjoyed watching the growth of his colonies fully as much as he had gloried in the din and excitement of the battle-field. In every way he sought to promote the prosperity of the settlers. He caused cargoes of seeds to be brought from Europe and distributed amongst them. He saw to it that the gold and silver mines were diligently worked, and thus made to increase rapidly the riches of the people. He sent out gangs of workmen to quarry stone, which served to build new towns; and as fast as the new towns were founded, settlers flocked in to fill them up.

It was while Pizarro was engaged in these peaceful pursuits that he sent his brother Gonzalo on an expedition which proved to be one of the most romantic and perilous that the Spaniards had ever undertaken in Peru. Gonzalo, to his great joy, was appointed by his brother governor of Quito, the northern kingdom, which had been conquered by the Inca Huayna Capac shortly before Pizarro's arrival in Peru. At the same time, Pizarro told Gonzalo to take a large force across the Cordilleras, and make an excursion to the countries on the eastern side of the mountains. One of his objects was to try to find the cinnamon groves, which, the Peruvians said, grew in great abundance beyond the giant range.

Gonzalo desired nothing better than to enter anew on a career of adventure. He was somewhat younger than Pizarro, and his daring spirit pined for the excitements of danger and conflict. Having got together a force consisting of two hundred foot-soldiers, one hundred and fifty horsemen, and four thousand Indians, he marched rapidly to the foot of the mountains, and began to creep up their rugged defiles.

Soon he and his companions began to suffer all the distresses incident to a wild and strange mountain region. They clambered painfully over the pathless crags and through the dense, entangled forests. As they mounted higher and higher they shivered with cold, which grew at every step more intense; until, near the summits, they struggled through the heaped-up snow and across slopes of glaring ice. Scarcely had they begun to descend on the eastern side, when they were horrified by a tremendous shock, which cast many of them suddenly upon the ground. The mountain cracked, and then yawned open, and sulphurous flames burst through the fissures. It was a terrible earthquake, and every moment Gonzalo expected to be swallowed up with all his company. Escaping this peril, they descended the rugged slopes, to find themselves below overwhelmed with a heat as distressing as the cold had been above. Terrific tempests of thunder and lightning broke over their heads, and tornadoes swept across the slopes, which almost carried the adventurers off their feet.

To crown all, their provisions began to give out; nor, in the wild and desolate country in which they found themselves, could they find any food fit to assuage their hunger. They soon became so famished that they killed and ate some dogs they had brought with them, and were finally reduced to chewing herbs and roots, and trying to digest the leather belts they wore around their waists. Gonzalo was on the point of giving up in despair, and retracing his steps as best he could to Peru, when some of the natives, whom his men had captured and brought to him, revived his spirits by telling him of a land full of gold, silver, and cinnamon, which lay some distance beyond. Plucking up his courage, and inspiring that of his men by the picture he drew of their coming good fortune, he once more pushed vigorously forward.

They ere long came to vast groves of cinnamon, and stripped off the aromatic bark with delight. But they could not take

it with them, and were forced to be content with the discovery, leaving it to future expeditions to gather its fruits. They marched on and on ; yet no such land of gold and plenty as had been reported to them rejoiced their eyes. At last they were relieved to come in sight of a broad, sweeping river, one of the largest the Spaniards had ever seen, called the "Napo." Here they hoped to find settlements and a plenty of food. They struggled with difficulty along the banks, which were so overgrown with dense brush that they could scarcely break through it. Suddenly they came to a roaring cataract, where the waters of the river plunged headlong for hundreds of feet through an awful chasm ; while below, as far as eye could reach, stretched out a series of boisterous rapids. Beyond these the river became more narrow ; and here Gonzalo resolved to cross over to the other bank, in the hope that the way along it might be easier. But he found progress on that side quite as difficult. At last, seeing that many of his men were weary beyond endurance, and that it was almost impossible to carry all the baggage, the idea struck him to build a kind of boat with which to transport the weaker men and their burdens.

Timber was felled, and the shoes of the horses were beaten into rude nails ; the gum of the trees served as pitch ; and the torn coats of the soldiers were used to fill the seams in the rude vessel. It was soon finished, and ready to be launched upon the river.

Among Gonzalo's chief officers was one named Orellana, who had come from Truxillo, Pizarro's own town. Gonzalo placed the utmost confidence in this man, and confided to him the command of the boat. Having chosen the less hardy half of his force, he caused them to embark with the greater portion of the baggage ; and having ordered Orellana to proceed down the river so slowly that those on shore could keep up with the boat, Gonzalo marched with the rest along the bank.

Their hardships were far from over. Their provisions were now nearly exhausted, and the poor fellows were forced to chew the leather of their belts, and even to eat toads, lizards, and snakes to keep themselves alive.

In this desperate situation Gonzalo would have turned back had he not kept hearing that some distance ahead was a flourishing land, watered by a larger river than the Napo, into which the latter emptied. He finally made up his mind to go no farther, but to send Orellana forward with a small force to explore the country beyond, and bring him back word whether there really existed such a land as the natives told him of.

One morning the boat was pushed out into the rapid stream. Orellana was upon it, with fifty chosen soldiers. No sooner had the craft struck the current than it sped swiftly away, and soon disappeared in the distance.

Gonzalo and those who remained with him had nothing to do but to exist as well as they could, and await patiently Orellana's return. They spent much of their time in weary search after food, of which they could only find the most wretched and scanty supply. After a lapse of a week without any signs of Orellana, Gonzalo began to grow impatient. What could have become of the boat and its occupants? Day after day passed, and yet no boat appeared. The days lengthened into weeks, the weeks into months; and still Orellana did not return. Gonzalo's patience was at length exhausted. Calling together the miserable remnant of his force, he ordered them to resume their march. He resolved to go forward at least as far as the junction of the rivers. It was a terrible journey, and the adventurers suffered untold tortures of hunger, heat, and sickness, many of them dying in agony by the way. It took no less than two months for them to reach the place where the Napo emptied into the larger river. This larger river was the famous Amazon.

Here still they heard no news and saw no signs of Orel-

lana. They found themselves in a wild and desolate region. And now a new danger threatened them from the ferocious savages whom they saw hovering in multitudes on the hills and edges of the woods.

One day, as Gonzalo was sitting gloomily in the midst of his forlorn camp, he was astonished to see a gaunt, cadaverous-looking white man, his clothes hanging in tatters and strings about his body, come feebly creeping out of the forest. The man was so weak and thin that he could scarcely drag himself forward. Several of Gonzalo's soldiers hurried up to him, and, supporting him with their arms, brought him to the captain.

"Who are you?" exclaimed Gonzalo, looking earnestly at him. "And how came you, a white man, a Spaniard, in this desolate wilderness?"

"I am Sanchez de Vargas," replied the man faintly; "a cavalier and a soldier, though you see me in this sad plight."

"Ah! I know you well, poor cavalier. You are one of those who went with Orellana. Tell me," added Gonzalo, rising in his eagerness and peering into the man's face, "where is Orellana?"

"Give me food and drink," returned Vargas, "and let me rest upon this bank, and I will tell you."

Having voraciously swallowed such miserable fare as the camp still provided, Vargas, reclining wearily upon the sward, told the story of Orellana's adventures, and revealed to Gonzalo the dismal news of what had become of him.

"We sailed very rapidly down the river," said he, "and reached this place, the junction of the rivers, in three days. But when we got here, we found the country savage and unfruitful, as you see. We were almost in despair. Our food gave out, and we thought we should all starve to death. Then Orellana called the chief officers together, and told them what he had resolved to do. It was useless, he said, to try to get back to Gonzalo again; the current was against

us, and we could never reach the place from which we started. Orellana therefore declared that he had made up his mind to continue straight on down the river to the ocean, to cross the Atlantic, and reach Spain. I cried out earnestly against this, and told him how perfidious it would be to leave you and your comrades in this wilderness to die of hunger or of the poisoned shafts of the savages. But Orellana grew very angry with me, and, telling me that I should not go with him, embarked on board the boat with the rest, and sailed away on the great river, leaving me here to starve."

Gonzalo's blood ran cold as he heard of Orellana's base treachery and desertion. Ere this, no doubt, the miscreant had reached the ocean, and was on his way to Europe. No hope remained that he would return, and save them from what seemed their impending doom.

The sequel of Orellana's voyage may be told here. After escaping many dangers, he at last traversed the whole length of the Amazon. He launched boldly out upon the waters of the Atlantic, and succeeded in reaching Spain. There he told wonderful stories of what he had seen and heard of the lands through which he had passed, and, resolved to make the most of his discoveries, easily persuaded a force of five hundred men to return with him to the banks of the Amazon. But he died on the way out; and his followers, disheartened, returned to their native country.

Nothing remained for Gonzalo, after it became certain that he should not see Orellana again, but to turn his face westward, and make his way back, if possible, over the desolate country and the perilous range of the Cordilleras to Quito. At first his soldiers, on learning his decision, were in despair. But Gonzalo had all his brother's power of persuasion. The soldiers loved him, for he always shared their every hardship, and was gentle and indulgent with their faults. He held out to them the prospect of returning to home and comfort, and perhaps riches, so temptingly, that their mur-

murs soon ceased, and they asked nothing better than that he should lead them back. The trials and difficulties with which the party had to contend on their homeward march may be judged, when it is said that they were more than a year returning to the land of Quito. No peril or distress known to adventure was spared them. Often they were forced to fight for their lives against hordes of swarthy and half-naked savages, who burst suddenly upon them in the densely wooded ravines, or dashed down upon them from behind sheltering boulders. Many a Spaniard and Peruvian fell wounded and poisoned by their envenomed arrows, and lay writhing in agony till death released them. Nor were the savages their only assailants. Wild beasts howled about their camp at night, and now and then leaped from the boughs or the jungles upon them, tearing their victims from limb to limb. Now they were horrified to hear the ominous rumbling under the earth which betokened an earthquake, and stood still with terror as they saw great fissures crack in the ground, puffing forth sulphurous smoke and flame. Terrific tempests burst upon them in places where they could find no shelter from the unwonted violence of the wind and rain. Their clothes rotted and hung in rags upon their emaciated, half-fed bodies; their arms rusted in their hands. For want of food they suffered day by day and week by week. They ate everything that they could chew, however noisome and unsavoury. Even their belts and knapsacks had become exhausted with much frantic chewing; and they were at last so woefully reduced that they struggled fiercely with each other over a toad or a snake, as if it were a delicious morsel.

Of course the poor creatures died by the hundred of hunger, disease, and very weariness. Some were killed by sunstroke in the plains; others were frozen to death by the bitter winds of the mountain heights.

When Gonzalo led his forlorn party down the sunny

slopes that led to Quito, there were scarcely two thousand Peruvians left of the four thousand he had led over the Cordilleras. Of the three hundred and fifty Spaniards, only eighty survived to tell the shocking story of their sufferings. As the people came out of Quito to greet their return, wives and children, searching eagerly in the gaunt and feeble band for husbands and fathers, failed to recognize them when they saw them, so horribly had their forms and features changed. But the poor fellows were glad enough to get home again, to sit in their houses, and receive the loving care of their families; and almost all who returned survived their hardships, and were restored to health.

But Gonzalo, who had now been away for more than two years, and had not heard a word of news since his departure, was overwhelmed with horror and grief by an event which had taken place during his absence, and which seemed to have completely changed the fortunes of the family of Pizarro. A crushing misfortune had overtaken them which it appeared no energy or courage could retrieve.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DEATH OF PIZARRO.

AFTER Gonzalo's departure, Pizarro remained at Lima, happy in the midst of his young family, busy building up his colonies, and having no longer any reason to fear that his rule would be again attacked by the Inca and his now scattered and overawed troops. His security seemed to be complete : no cloud dimmed the horizon of his power and glory.

But he was, quite unconsciously, really in the greatest danger ; and suddenly, almost without warning, this peril was to burst upon him and overwhelm him.

The young son of Almagro, Diego, was living in Lima, in a large house on the same square where stood Pizarro's palace. He was left in absolute freedom, to go and come as he pleased ; and he indulged in a great deal of luxury and display.

Besides Diego himself, there were numerous old friends and adherents of Almagro in Lima and in the settlements along the neighbouring sea-coast. Many of the veterans who had followed the old cavalier to the south still survived ; and while they revered his memory, they devotedly attached themselves to the fortunes of his young and handsome son. Almagro had made his son the heir to his claim upon Cuzco, and upon an equal share of the conquest of Peru.

All the while that Pizarro was absorbed in the settle-

ments, these friends of Almagro, who one and all detested Pizarro, were engaged in conspiring against him. Diego's house became their common rendezvous, and almost every night a large company of cavaliers met there to plot against the governor. They could not forgive the execution of Almagro, and they were determined to avenge it at the risk of their lives.

Every now and then Pizarro received hints of these secret meetings, and was warned by his friends of the bitter feeling shared by all of Almagro's party ; but he recklessly made light of these alarms, and declared that his enemies were too weak and scattered to be feared.

"Oh, poor wretches !" he would say with a pitying smile, "they have had bad luck enough ; we will let them alone."

He neither took any precautions against their hostility, nor did he attempt to win their friendship. He simply treated them with contempt, and went his way and attended to his affairs as if they were not in existence.

Among Pizarro's favourites was a man named Picado, his secretary—a very necessary officer indeed, as Pizarro could neither read nor write. This Picado was a very arrogant, pompous, strutting fellow, who put on a great many airs and made a great display in his dress. He was especially hateful to Almagro's party, because he never lost an opportunity to ridicule and insult them. He used to go by Diego's house in a very ostentatious way, and display placards in his gaudy hat, with some contemptuous epithet for them. He domineered over them every day, believing himself to be safe under the cover of Pizarro's power, and sure that the "men of Chili," as Almagro's men were called, would not dare to resent his indignities.

Picado's daily insults, however, drove the hostile cavaliers to desperation. Hating Pizarro, they could not bear the insolence of his puppet. They only became more firmly resolved than ever to put an end to Pizarro's rule.

One night twenty of Almagro's most daring and devoted followers met at Diego's house. They gathered around a long table, at the head of which the young, frank, rosy face of Diego appeared. By his side sat a very dark and fierce-looking cavalier, with long raven locks streaked with gray, a heavy moustache, and large glittering black eyes, named Juan de Rada. A dim lamp cast a feeble light through the apartment. The conspirators were one and all closely muffled in their capacious cloaks.

They talked long in low and earnest tones, Rada speaking the most often and the most vehemently. Diego scarcely spoke a word, but listened intently to all that was said. Rada proposed a project which startled his companions. He urged it with fierce words and violent gestures; and finally the rest assented to it. There was one among them, however, who in his heart revolted from it, and who secretly resolved that it should not be executed.

Rada's plan was to waylay Pizarro on the following Sunday as he was returning to his palace from mass at the cathedral, to strike him down, and assassinate him in the street.

This decided upon, the conspirators separated, to meet again on Sunday morning at Diego's house.

The cavalier who was secretly resolved to balk the conspirators had no sooner parted from the rest than he hastened to a priest, to whom he was in the habit of confessing.

To the priest he disclosed the whole conspiracy. The holy man was startled, and at once hastened to Pizarro's palace. There he met the secretary Picado, and informed him of the danger that threatened his master. Picado carried the story, in great alarm, to Pizarro. What was his amazement when Pizarro broke into a loud laugh!

"Oh, rest easy, Picado!" he cried. "Don't you see that this is a very cunning trick of the priest? All he wants is to be made a bishop!"

Pizarro deemed it prudent, however, to apprise the judge of what he had heard, and to abstain from going to the cathedral on the appointed Sunday morning. The judge, after inquiring into the matter, came to the conclusion that there was no such conspiracy as had been reported ; and repairing to Pizarro, he said,—

“Fear nothing, marquis. No harm shall come to you while I hold the rod of justice in my hands.”

On Sunday the conspirators met early at Diego Almagro's house. They were one and all armed to the teeth, and their faces betrayed a dark and stern resolution. Rada went from one to the other to see if each one was prepared for his part, and animated their purpose by his vehement words.

Diego's house stood, it chanced, next door to the cathedral ; so that the conspirators, by peeping cautiously through the windows, might easily see the people going in and out of the sacred edifice. With bated breath they watched the cathedral door, and scanned each figure, as, dressed in Sabbath finery, the worshippers assembled. It was a lovely morning in the latter part of June, and all Lima seemed to have turned out to the morning mass. Spanish cavaliers came sauntering along in groups in their silken or woollen capes and plumed hats, stopped a moment to chat in the doorway, and then entered. Little knots of dark-eyed, black-haired Peruvian women, decked out with gaudy ornaments of gold, silver, and gems, and with gowns striped or checked with all the colours of the rainbow, made their way leisurely to the Christian church, whose creed, after the example of their Spanish husbands or masters, they had not unwillingly embraced.

But as the conspirators peered anxiously from behind the curtains, they saw no signs of Pizarro. In vain they looked for his dazzling retinue, or tried to recognize his tall figure among the comers. He did not appear.

“Perhaps, after all,” whispered Rada hoarsely, “we have

failed to espy him as he went in. He will doubtless issue forth when mass is over."

There was an interval of breathless suspense. The minutes seemed hours, as the "men of Chili," their hands grasping their swords, remained huddled near the window. At last the congregation issued forth again. They came out slowly as they had gone in, but it was not long before the cathedral was deserted. A few stragglers alone lingered about the door, or stopped on the great square for a pleasant chat.

Rada, deadly pale, turned and gazed at his confederates. Had Pizarro been warned of their plot? If so, they were ruined. There was not a moment to be lost. They must decide at once either to make a desperate venture, or to fly for their lives. Several of the cavaliers urged the latter course.

"Perhaps," they said, "Pizarro is still ignorant of our attempt. But he will soon hear of it. Let us make our escape from Lima while we can."

Rada drew himself up, and glared fiercely upon those who thus proposed flight.

"No!" he cried. "It is too late to draw back. We must go on to the end. Let us at once, without an instant's delay, go and attack the tyrant in his palace."

Then drawing his sword and striding rapidly to the door, he added,—

"Follow me! We will issue into the street, declare aloud our intention, and call upon the people to come to our aid."

With this he threw open the door and rushed out. The others followed their daring leader with one accord.

"Death to the tyrant! long live the king!" cried Rada, as he appeared on the square. A few stragglers stopped, open-mouthed with amazement. In another moment a small crowd had collected; and several cavaliers drew their swords, and repeating Rada's cry, joined the group of conspirators

Pizarro's palace stood just across the square, and thither the party hastily bent their steps. It is said that, as they were going, one of the conspirators came to a puddle of water, and stepped around it. Rada perceived this, and exclaimed,—

“What! are you afraid of wetting your feet? You are about to wade up to your knees in blood!”

It took but a minute or two for the conspirators to reach the gate of Pizarro's lordly dwelling. This gate was a very high and heavy one, built for defence as well as for convenience. It conducted into a spacious court-yard, and this led to still another court-yard within. Had the gate been shut, it is probable that the plot would have failed. But Pizarro did not seriously suspect anything; and the great gate, as usual, was wide open.

Rada, sword in hand, boldly entered, followed by the rest. He passed quickly through the first court-yard, and made his way without resistance into the second. The conspirators were now terribly excited, and kept shouting as loud as they could, “Death to the tyrant!”

Some of Pizarro's attendants, lounging in the inner court-yard, became terror-stricken. Rada struck one of them with his sword, and he fell howling with pain upon the pavement. Another, as soon as he had gathered his senses, rushed wildly into the palace, crying out,—

“Help, help! Almagro's men are coming to murder the marquis!”

The servant ran upstairs, burst open the doors, and without ceremony plunged into the apartment where his master was.

Pizarro was seated at table, quietly dining with a few of his friends. There were Alcantara his half-brother, Velasquez the judge, the bishop, and his secretary Picado. Dinner was just finished, and the party were lingering over the fruit and wine. The terrified cry of the servant, and the fierce

shouting in the court-yard, roused them from their placid enjoyment. One of the guests hastened down the stairway, but almost immediately returned, saying that the palace was indeed attacked by traitors.

At this the judge and one or two others ran out into a corridor in the rear, and let themselves down into the garden. The judge, as he clambered over, held the rod of justice, which he had with him, in his mouth : so it was true that harm only came to Pizarro when the judge no longer "held the rod of justice in his hands."

Meanwhile the fearless Pizarro did not for a moment think of flight. Rising leisurely from the table, with set teeth and an unmoved countenance which did not even grow pale, he summoned Chaves, one of his chamberlains, and ordered him to close and bar the door of the antechamber which led into the corridor that the conspirators were now approaching.

"I only wish," said he quietly, "to hold the miscreants off until Alcantara and I can buckle on our armour."

Passing across the room, he took his armour from the wall, and began to encase himself in it. Alcantara with firm hand helped him, and then put his own armour on.

Unhappily Chaves neglected to obey his master's command. Instead of closing and securing the antechamber door, his curiosity got the better of him, and he held it ajar so as to observe the conspirators as they mounted the staircase. Seeing this with a glance of his quick eye, Rada rushed forward, closely followed by his confederates, and burst the door open.

At this moment Alcantara, issuing from the dining-room, saw that the conspirators had forced their way into the antechamber. Calling hoarsely to several cavaliers and pages who were near by, he threw himself upon Rada ; the rest joined arms, and a terrible and desperate combat ensued. In a moment two or three men lay stretched on the floor. But

Alcantara, wounded by half-a-dozen sword-thrusts, continued to struggle fiercely.

Pizarro meanwhile was standing in the dining-room, in vain trying to fasten on his armour. At last he angrily threw down his cuirass, and winding one arm in the folds of his cloak, so as to use it as a kind of shield, with the other he drew his sword, and boldly advanced upon his assailants.

Before they knew of his presence, Pizarro was dealing terrific blows with quick and heavy hand on every side of him. He fought with the strength and ferocity of a tiger; it seemed as if, old as he was, all the iron strength of his youth had been restored to him. One after another the conspirators fell, stricken to the earth by his overwhelming blows.

"What, vile traitors!" he cried in a stentorian voice, "do you come to murder me in my own house?"

For a moment his assailants seemed cowed and stunned by his impetuous attack. But now the brave Alcantara lay writhing and dying on the blood-stained floor. Pizarro's other defenders had also fallen, mortally wounded. He alone maintained himself against the murderers.

Rada, impatient to see his foe still struggling, cried out, "Let's have done with this! Death to the tyrant!"

At the same time, seizing one of his comrades, he hurled him bodily upon Pizarro, who seized the man by the throat, and ran him through the heart with his sword. But as he did this, Rada quickly advanced and plunged his dagger deep in Pizarro's throat. In an instant four or five swords were buried in the hero's body; and crying out "Jesu!" Pizarro fell headlong upon the floor.

Gasping for breath, while the blood spurted from his mouth and wounds, he lifted himself upon one elbow, and his fast-glazing eyes glared around him. Then leaning over and dipping his finger in a pool of his blood, he with difficulty

drew a cross on the floor. He bent down, and pressed his lips upon the sacred symbol. One of the conspirators now dealt him a final blow with his sword.

Pizarro sank back : a slight shudder ran through his frame, and he ceased to breathe.

Rada and his followers, waving their blood-streaked swords, ran out into the street, and scattered through the city, shouting, "The tyrant is dead ! The laws are restored ! Long live the emperor and our governor Almagro !"

The city was soon aroused to the wildest dismay and confusion. The adherents of Almagro rallied at his house, and soon a body of three hundred soldiers was formed to defend his title and person. Pizarro's palace, and the houses of his principal officers and friends, were plundered by the victorious party ; and the secretary Picado was seized and cast into prison.

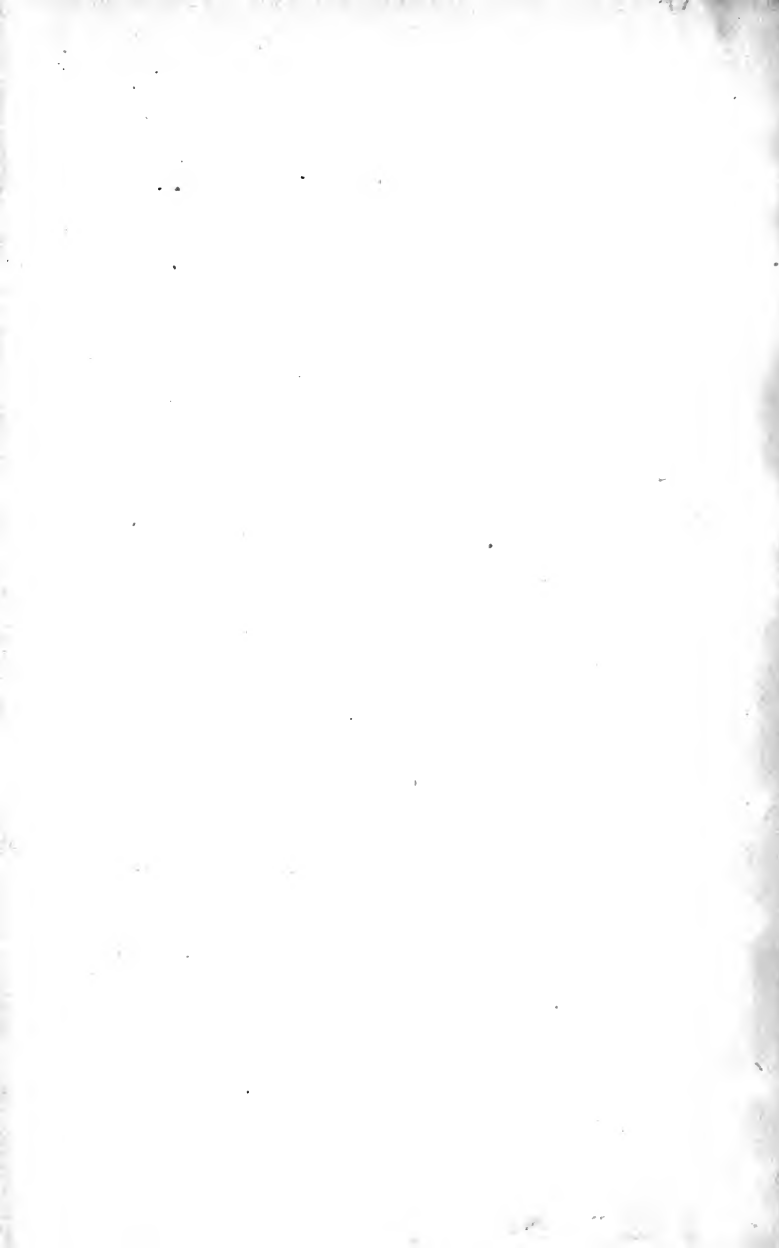
Meanwhile some of Pizarro's bitterest enemies clamoured to have the dead hero's body dragged to the market-place, and there hung in disgrace on the public gallows. But Almagro would not consent to this. The corpse was tenderly taken up by some of Pizarro's mourning attendants, and quietly placed in an obscure grave in the cathedral, with a hurried funeral ceremony at the dead of night. Years afterwards the coffin was taken from its resting-place, and deposited in a magnificent tomb near the high altar ; and Pizarro's remains now lie in the new cathedral at Lima, which was built a half-century after his death.

Such was the sudden and violent end of the heroic soldier and great conqueror, Francisco Pizarro. He was somewhat over sixty years old at the time of his death, which took place on the 26th of June 1541. He had lived long enough to prove his intrepid valour on many a hard-fought field ; to acquire for Spain, with but a handful of followers, one of the noblest and richest possessions in the world ; and to gain for himself as much power and renown as any man ever achieved

in a career of conquest over a less civilized empire. While he was sometimes cruel, and too often perfidious, he was also beyond most men impetuous in action, persevering against the most formidable obstacles, temperate in living, lavish with his wealth, possessed of wonderful endurance, noble and soldierly in bearing, self-confident, resolute, and true to his kin and his friends. He is one of the greatest figures in history, and his name must live long as one of the world's foremost heroes.

For many years after Pizarro's death, Peru continued to be the scene of fierce conflicts between rival Spanish aspirants to its rule. War and conspiracy wrought long confusion in the land ; but at last it became once more orderly and settled, and was governed by viceroys sent out by the Spanish monarchs. The native Peruvians never succeeded in restoring their Inca to the throne of his ancestors, the Children of the Sun. The country remained under Spanish dominion for nearly three centuries. It was conquered by Pizarro in 1532, and it became independent of Spain by the success of a revolution which took place in 1821. For more than half a century Peru has been a republic. But the beautiful land still retains many vestiges of the long and prosperous reign of the Incas, as well as of the rude and devastating conquests of Pizarro ; and these remain as monuments at once of its ancient grandeur and power, and of its degradation under the heels of the conquering stranger.


THE END.







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